

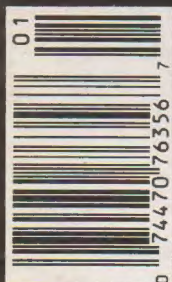
PROPAGANDA

No. 14 SPRING 1990



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White Zombie · Danzig · Faith No More

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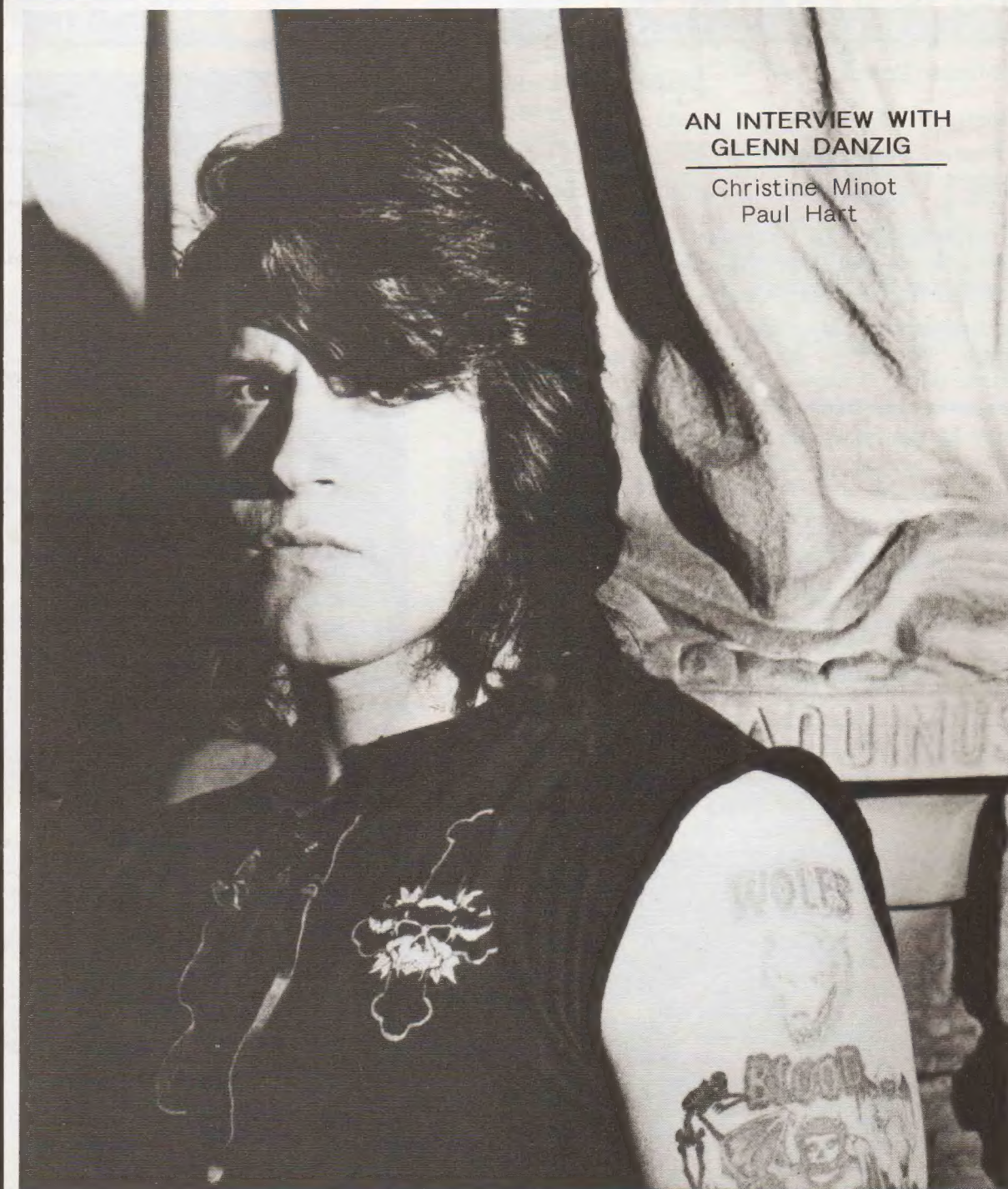
Soundgarden's Chris Cornell hands over the goods to Propaganda's Stephanie Young on page 16.

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DANZIG: DOES GOD LIKE IT?



AN INTERVIEW WITH GLENN DANZIG

Christine Minot
Paul Hart

He raised his spear as the wolves approached. He could barely hear their growls over the sound of his pounding heart. Their eyes were hollow, totally devoid of soul. For him, mortal fear and instinct for survival had closed in, leaving no room for reason or compassion. For that instant in time, prey and predator, man and beast, were of one kind.

Primitive man facing the wolf pack is not too unlike a fan facing the band Danzig live in concert. So raw, so menacing, so full of primitive emotion is their sound, that you feel stripped of everything that makes you modern, rational homosapien. Their songs, such as "The Hunter," extoll times in human history when such cultured concepts as Greek logic, Roman law, and Christian forgiveness had no meaning or relevance. To Danzig, man is beast, and his morals are relative to his needs.

"We tend to accept everything we're taught about morality," says lead singer and mastermind behind it all, Glenn Danzig. "Morality's a control mechanism. Every social institution uses it, especially organized religion... the church. How many people actually take the time to investigate the origins of religious ideas. Most people just accept what they're fed."

You quickly realize that Glenn is not most people when you analyze what he says in conversation and in his lyrics about the subject. He is truly a scholar in his own right when it comes to the historical development of society's concepts of good and evil and it's evolution of religious thought. Songs such as "Twist Of Cain," on the debut Danzig album, infer that even the Bible itself, the cornerstone of our Judeo-Christian belief system, has been periodically altered by theologians at the behest of church



Mark Weiss

The Danzig gang lurks in the shadows of the American rock scene.

officials to reflect the kind of morality they wanted prevailed on their flocks. "Twist Of Cain" was inspired by a book entitled "The Forgotten Books Of Eden," which relates certain lost (deliberately or otherwise) chapters of the Bible, some of which don't paint all that favorable a picture of certain revered characters and events in the Good book. "There are even chapters on Christ that have been omitted," adds Glenn, "because some of what he did in these stories doesn't support what the church is trying to teach about him." It is true that the earliest forms of the Bible were much more harsh and unforgiving than the present-day, "watered down" (as Glenn puts it) version. Also, the God of the Old Testament was much more vengeful and angry than the one we supposedly worship today. So, what is God then, good or evil?

"Maybe it makes more sense to ask what is good and what is evil," responds Glenn. "I mean, good alone or evil alone makes no sense; they're only relative to each other. Without one you can't describe the other. They're both a part of life, and so, I guess, a part of God. Anyway, each society views them differently. If they were absolute concepts, there'd be no conflict in the world." Couldn't some of these ideas be construed as anti-Christian?

"Well, if wanting to know the truth about Christianity, like how and why it began, is anti-Christian, then that's someone else's problem, not mine."

It was this search for the origin of Christianity, especially in northern Europe and the British isles, that brought paganism to Glenn's attention. Most of our Christian customs associated with holidays like Christmas, Easter and Halloween/All Saints' Day have their roots in pre-Christian pagan Europe. "Christmas is celebrated on Dec. 25th only because it was the Winter Solstice festival," explains Glenn. "In order to convert the people to Christianity, a lot of compromises had to be made, like keeping a lot of the old pagan customs." Yes kiddies, you'll never hear your pastor admit to the fact that putting a decorated tree in your house was a pagan Norse custom long before there was a Christmas. Even Halloween and All Saints' Day were originally

the Celtic festival Samhain (meaning Summer's End) which celebrated the harvest and the dead. It also happens to be the name of the band Glenn formed after the Misfits broke up.

"I'm interested in the origins of a lot of religions," says Glenn. "Also Eastern mysticism, the Middle Eastern concept of martyrdom, even paranormal stuff like psychic phenomena. And I want to do more on obscure stuff in literature, stuff most people never heard of."

Danzig records (the debut effort from late '88 and the



The Beast pays for our sins in the "Am I Demon" video.



The Axe Man — John Christ

new 777 Lp) basically reflect what Glenn is into at the time they're written. And with song titles like "Evil Thing," "Am I Demon" and "When Death Had No Name," one shudders even to think of asking.

As far as the music is concerned, it's a genuinely timeless blend of early '70s hard rock and metal with a dark undercurrent of heavy blues in the style of the Animals or the Doors. In fact, the combination of Glenn Danzig's deep, brooding vocals and the slow-crunch, grunge instrumentals makes one wonder what early Black Sabbath would have sounded like if Jim Morrison had taken over the vocal duties from Ozzy. While having a truly classic-rock sound, Danzig's music has a very new and original style to it. It can't be linked to any present trend, and thus will probably never become outdated.

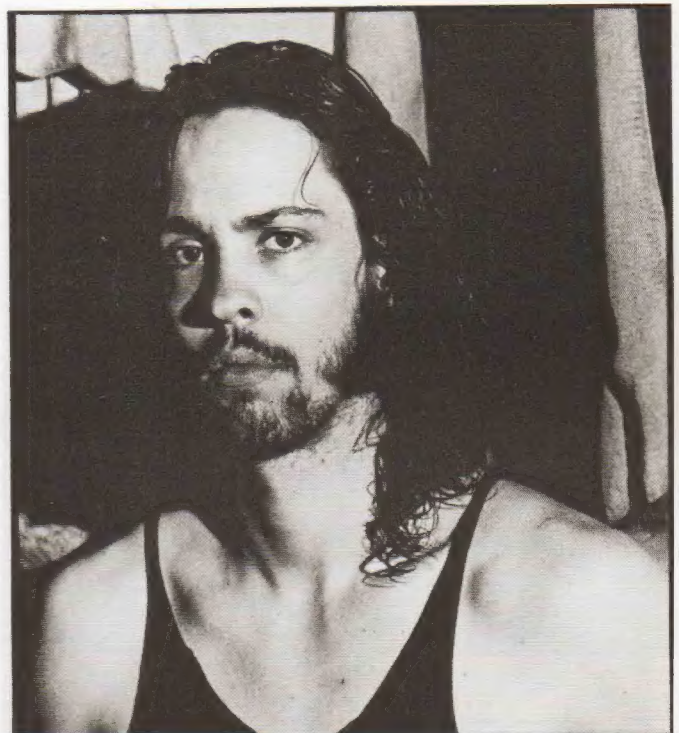
With all the tendencies out there in the music world for bands to follow one banal trend or another, how has Glenn managed to avoid sounding like any of his contemporaries? "I really don't listen to much music," confides Glenn. "There might be a couple of things I like now and then, but on the whole, there isn't much I follow. To tell you the truth, I'd rather read." And judging by the size of his book collection (which is extensive), it seems as though Glenn would rather get his inspiration from the written word as opposed to the sung one.

You can rest assured, that as long as Glenn keeps his nose in the books, Danzig will keep putting out music that challenges your intellect rather than insults it.

**The only absolute in morality is
the absolute power to impose it.**

— Friedrich Nietzsche
Beyond Good And Evil

Special thanks to Michelle at Geffen and Victoria at Def American.



Michael Lavine

Acidic Bass — Eerie Von



Legendary Banger — Chuck Biscuits

BEFORE DANZIG

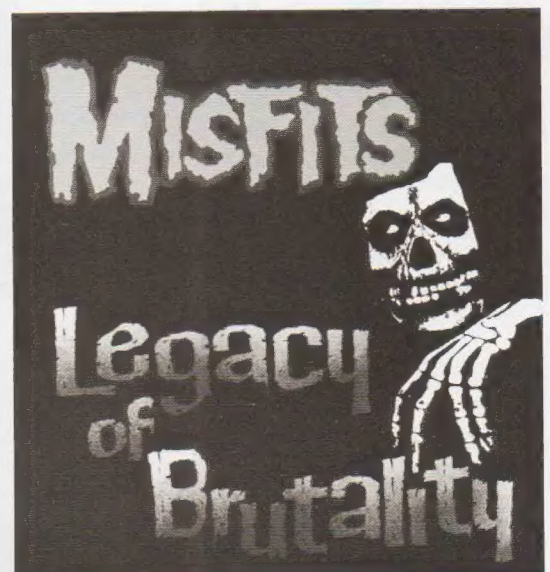
Paul Hart



The Misfits left a legacy of fear during the early '80s hardcore/punk era.



With albums like **EVIL LIFE** and **LEGACY OF BRUTALITY**, the Misfits evoked images of horror and occult psychotronics. Glenn Danzig wrote songs



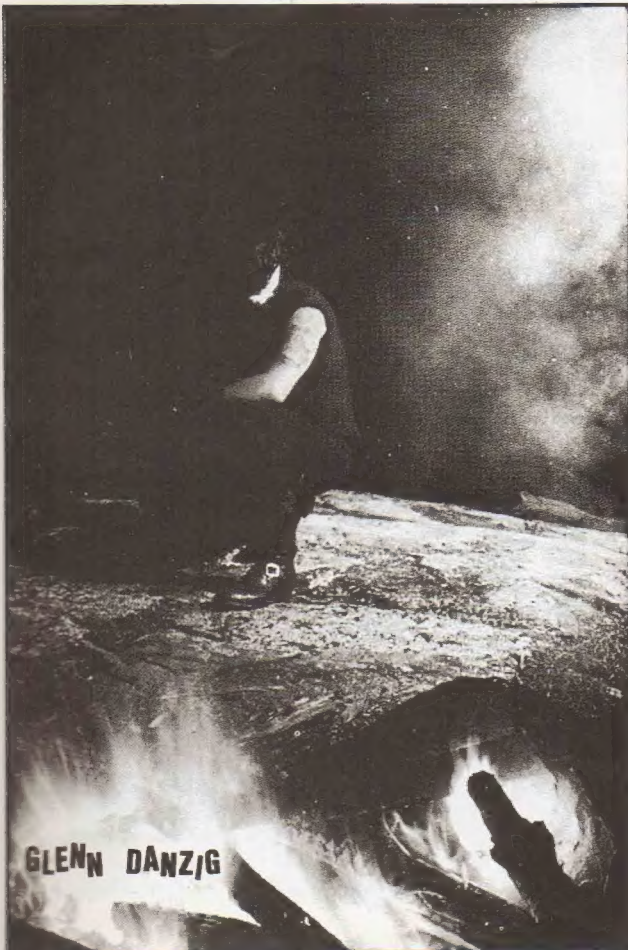
that conjured up demons from the old chiller thrillers such as "Monster From Green Hell," "Night Of The Living Dead" & "Horror Hotel."

NOVEMBER-COMING-FIRE

SAMHAIN



After the Misfits, came Samhain, a band named after the fire rituals performed by the pagans to ward off winter's demons of darkness.



GLENN DANZIG



EERIE VON

Before there was a Danzig, before there was a Halloween, even before there was Christianity, there was Samhain. The pagan tribes of the English isles believed that the end of summer and the loss of daylight that came with the autumn were induced by demonic forces which ushered in the harsh conditions of the long, dark winter months. The Samhain festival (which later became Halloween's Eve or Halloween under Christianity) was held after the October harvest and was punctuated by masquerades and the building of large open fires to stave off these forces of darkness. Here we see Glenn and Eerie Von observing the fire rites on the NOVEMBER COMING FIRE Lp.

LOOK WHAT THE CYBORG
DRAGGED IN!

VOIVOD

Voivod are metal's future.
.....*Sounds magazine*

Voivod may be the first rock and
roll ensemble ...to take Quantum
Physics into account.
.....*Village Voice*

Nothingface is an album that
sounds more like it was manufac-
tured in a space age laboratory
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in an everyday recording studio
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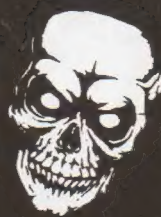


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WHITE ZOMBIE



Interview by Paul Hart
Photos by Michael Lavine
and Ernesto Urdaneta
Art by Rob Straker
Thanks to Yvonne and
Janet @ Caroline Records

IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

DATELINE: Alphabet City, Lower East Side, N.Y.C.

There is something terribly wrong in the world. Something disastrous — a cataclysm of epic proportion — is about to happen. There is a sense of dread, of total helplessness, a feeling of fatalism.

These are only some of the emotions and sensations one races through when exposed to the mind-scrambling, psycho-delic grunge-rock of the maniacal White Zombie, a New York based band that has forced the music scene here to undergo shock therapy. So defiant of description are they, that you'll get hooked on them long before you get a handle on how to classify them, as has already happened to such Zombie fans as James Hetfield, Glenn Danzig and Iggy Pop, to name a few.

"Our music is a catharsis," says Rob "Zombie" Straker, the dreadlocked, Christ-figure, lead vocalist of the band. "It reflects the anger and frustration of a really screwed-up world... a dog-eat-dog world. I have a pretty negative opinion about human nature — it basically sucks. People are just instinctively aggressive and violent, and it's always been that way, so we're not gonna pretend to have a solution. For the band, we just deal with it by channeling this aggression into our music."

If one's art is truly only a catharsis and a reflection of one's environment, then it's no wonder White Zombie's music is particularly aggressive and frightening. The band resides in the deepest, darkest, dirtiest byways of Manhattan's Lower East Side — a drug-infested, violence-plagued devil's playground. It seems dirt n' slime begets dirt n' slime.

"We don't do songs about some made-up satanic bullshit like a lot of these contrived metal bands do. You wanna see hell, just look around you." Hey, isn't that a bodega being robbed?

White Zombie delivers this "hell on earth" with some of the most menacing offerings ever laid to vinyl. Some songs actually evoke sensations of delirium and terror; all reflect the ugly underbelly of human nature. From "Murderworld," "Revenge," "Demonspeed," "Godslayer," "Power Hungry," "Acid Flesh" and "Disaster Blaster" on the MAKE THEM DIE SLOWLY Lp to "Gun Crazy," "Shack Of Hate," "Future Shock" and "Scumkill" on the SOUL CRUSHER Lp, man's thin veneer of civility is stripped away to reveal the naked human beast. On the latest Zombie single released in December, the band both evokes the '70s and buries them for good by obliterating the old Kiss song "God Of Thunder." Hail to the new gods of thunder!

Subject matter isn't the only problem Rob has with all the banal, standardized heavy metal bands. "The commercial garbage never had any credibility, and the speed/thrash thing has run its course. It was too restrictive — one tempo (fast), one dimensional. I enjoy doing stuff with a lot of time changes — it lets you change moods. Anyway, too many of those bands were just copying whatever Metallica did. It got really contrived. That's why some of the more unique and innovative bands like Jane's Addiction and the Red Hot Chili Peppers are getting the big crowds these days. They're just more interesting to watch. Sure, there are elements of thrash in some of our music, but you



can't limit yourself to any one influence. I grew up listening to Kiss mostly, and of course, Sabbath, AC/DC, Motorhead, Black Flag, so I have a lot of influences from that too."

It would be a fatal mistake to view White Zombie as one of those gloom n' doom bands that take themselves and their subject matter too seriously. Everything these denizens from the depths of the barrio do is with a streetwise sense of sarcasm, giving them the completely unique persona of being frightening and funny at the same time. While ripping into the menacing "Demonspeed" at a recent show, Rob showered the audience with xeroxed copies of a National Enquirer article, "How To Tell If Your Kid Is Into Satan," and proceeded to read off the list of "warning signs." Could listening to WZ be one of them??

Crucial to the Zombie aura is the visual imagery they project. Many of the band's record covers and inner sleeves are emblazoned with Rob's chilling, urban-extremist caricatures. He and bassist/girlfriend Sean Yseult attended Parsons Art School which contributed to White Zombie being labeled an art-noise band during their early days. "We also came from that part of town where all the art fags hung out," adds Rob. "We never felt a part of that crowd, and they never liked us much. Our audience has mostly been punk and metal kids who wear Metallica T-shirts and mosh massively, which is cool."

Also of great influence on the band's psyche are the B-grade horror films of the '30s, '40s and '50s. "They had atmosphere," says Rob. And probably no film had more atmosphere than the genuinely creepy and surreal **White Zombie** (1932) where voodoo cult leader Bela Lugosi introduced a



White Zombie: Rob, Ivan DePrume, Sean, Jay Yuenger.

shocked American public to the occult practices of Haitian mysticism. Now it's White Zombie, the band, putting the wamma-jamma on us. And the curse, it seems, will only get stronger and more pervasive. Currently, the band is recording their third Lp for Caroline, and like the others, you can be sure it will chew up your soul and spit it out like spent Hubba Bubba. This past summer, Chris Williamson of Rock Hotel productions was blown away by a show the band put on at CBGB's. After their set, Chris let WZ know how he felt about them and promised to make them stars. He signed

them on to a massive Rock Hotel bill at the Ritz a month later. It had to have been the event of the year. If a lineup like Nevermore, Cycle Sluts From Hell, White Zombie and Danzig doesn't do anything for you, then you must be clinically brain dead.

"That was a great show 'cause the crowd was really crazy — and huge," recalls Rob. "Also, the lineup really worked well." A cold-sweat angst filled the air as White Zombie pounded out their set. With red ambulance lights spinning and police sirens blaring all around the stage, Rob whipped the crowd into a moshing frenzy. It was a scene frighteningly reminiscent of a very troubled, hot summer night on the Lower East Side. It had become another Tompkins Square riot. White Zombie had welcomed us to their world.

**This is murderworld, buddy
Not just another traffic jam
No credit card gonna get you home.**
— "Murderworld"



Zombies on the mean streets of the Big Apple Beast.





METALLICA

Interview by
Stephanie Young
Photos by
Ross Halfin & Nancie Hemminger



THE SOUND AND THE FURY



Metallica is Kirk Hammett, Lars Ulrich, James Hetfield, and Jason Newsted, who hung out with PROPAGANDA at the Irvine Meadows Amphitheater in Laguna Hills, California.

Tonight is Metallica's 248th show on the JUSTICE tour. Tomorrow will be their last in the U.S. and then on to a land of dictators, revolutionaries and failed coup attempts. After the South American tour, it's a year of hiatus. Bassist Jason Newsted is wondering what he'll do when he goes home. "I don't want it to be over. I don't want to go home," admits the 26-year-old, who's been with the heavy rock band three years. "I mean, you can sleep for six days and do all that other fun stuff like shoot guns and play basketball. But after a few weeks, you start going 'AAAHHH!!!'. I guess I could sit around and drink a whole bunch of wine?"

After 17 months on the road, the band that defined '80s metal is begging for more, and it's this drive that keeps them going. "It might sound corny, but we love what we're doing," says Jason, looking around the almost bare trailer which serves as a dressing room. "Music is our life, our livelihood. We all look at things a bit differently and have different influences, but we know what

we're able to do, what we're able to achieve."

About a year and a half ago, the San Francisco-based group known for their "thorny" sound released ...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, their fourth Lp. Since its release, the album has sold over two million copies and marks the band's most successful album to date. Jason appears dumbfounded by it all. He's down to earth and still speaks with a mid-western drawl.

JUSTICE was Jason's first full length recording with the band. Prior to this, he played bass for Flotsam and Jetsam, Arizona's premier thrasher outfit, who released one mildly successful album called SEEK AND DESTROY. He did just that. Like a lot of young musicians who haven't been born in the big city, Jason left Cornflake town — Battle Creek, Michigan — for the cacti of Arizona. In the desert domain, he worked various jobs and eventually hooked up with Flotsam and Jetsam.

Jason joined Metallica in Oct. '86, shortly after their original bassist Cliff Burton was killed in a bus accident.



As the rest of the band supplies the sound, James Hetfield provides the fury. His chilling tales paint a bleak picture of things to come. "Fire. To begin whipping dance of the dead. Blackened is the end. In the exit of humanity. Color our world blackened."

while on tour in Europe. Immediately following the tragedy the band cancelled the remaining dates of the tour and went home to mourn the death of their friend. Within a few months, the remaining three members of Metallica (James Hetfield — vocals/guitar, Kirk Hammett — guitar, and Lars Ulrich — drums) were back on their feet and started auditioning bassists. Jason was chosen out of forty guys who auditioned. Around this time, they released an Ep of cover tunes. These were recorded in Lars Ulrich's garage and are known as "Garage Days Re-revisited."

In early 1988, the band released "Cliff 'Em All," a homemade video containing old interviews and live performances recorded before the accident. In September of '88, ...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL was released. The band's tribute to the late bassist can be found on side two. Appropriately, the song is entitled "To Live Is To Die," a nine and a half minute piece centered around one of Cliff's basslines. The cut has only eight lines of verse but contains some of the finest words heard on a rock album to day. "When a man lies, he murders some part of the world."

"Those lyrics were written a long time ago," explains Jason. "Cliff walked up to James one day when he first joined the band and goes, 'Here, put some lyrics on top of that.'"

The other eight songs on JUSTICE read like parables. All but one of the songs ("To Live Is To Die") has some type of social or political lesson tucked neatly beneath its grooves. The title track sends home the message of a judicial system gone bad. "Halls of Justice painted green,

Money talking..."

"That was the general idea," says Jason further explaining the song's content. "Whoever has the most money makes the rules. If somebody with some serious bucks gets accused of murder or something like that, and they have enough money to pad enough people's pockets, they'll get out of it no matter what the legal system is. It doesn't matter if it's the schools or the church or the government or whatever."

The song starts off sounding like a funeral for corrupt souls — very slow, almost organ-like guitar which eventually crashes into the trademark Metallica "crunch." Once James Hetfield gets going, our ears serve him well.

A dark segment in our country's past provides the basis for another track, "The Shortest Straw." It deals with the red scare and ensuing witch hunt that swept our nation and climaxed in the early '50s. "Suspicion is your name. Your honesty to blame, Put dignity to shame..."

"'The Shortest Straw' is about the blacklisting that went on during the McCarthy era," explains Jason. Mr. McCarthy buried Hollywood's top ten — ten writers, producers and actors who were indicted on charges that they were communists. Many others had their careers and lives ruined by the trials. Former president Ronald Reagan, then head of the Screen Actor's Guild, was one of the key witnesses to testify against them. Metallica's hard-hitting rendition is a masterpiece of fast beats and angry growls. The type of song you could bang your head against a history book to.

"Dyer's Eve," the last track on side two, explores how

overprotective parents do more harm than good. This particular definition of the word *dyer* refers to one who colors or taints the personality of another. The dye is cast.

"Same thing I've always heard from you. Do as I say, not as I do..."

"That's about parents sheltering their children from the real world," explains Jason, who looks younger than his 26 years. "Mother" by Glenn Danzig is a similar tribute.

"Mother, can you keep them in the dark for life. Can you hide them from the waiting world..."

It shouldn't surprise any readers that Danzig is one of Metallica's favorite bands (the group supported them on one of their European tours), and it's not unusual for the guys to break into a Danzig song during soundcheck.

Jason is definitely concerned with the messages behind their medium. "We have a bit of an influence on kids these days, and I think all we're trying to do is show that even though they can read it in the newspaper or see it on the news every single day, they wouldn't pay attention to Ted Koppel or whoever, but they might pay attention to James (Hetfield). So we're trying to tell them to be aware of what's going on around them."

Metallica has been criticized for their aggressive approach. Yet sometimes there's no other way to express the ugly truth about drug abuse or mind control. "We think young people should make up their own minds," says Jason. "They shouldn't just go along and do crack or whatever stupid shit kids do just because somebody else is doing it."

At the MTV awards this past fall, Axl Rose of Guns N' Roses expressed his admiration for the band. He praised the group for their strong political views and felt they deserved the award Guns N' Roses received in the Heavy Metal video singles' category.

In the past, "Welcome Home (Sanitarium)" from the *Master Of Puppets* Lp and other tracks have exposed the band's anti-war position. Last year they released their first video ever for the "One" song, about a casualty of war.

"We wanted to do something that would fit Metallica," says Jason. "It was something different and a bit unique for us." The idea came from a book written by Dalton Trumbo in the '30s called "Johnny Got His Gun." The story takes place during World War One and examines what happens to a soldier who's been turned into a paraplegic without arms or legs or the ability to communicate with people after he's exposed to a landmine. The book was later adapted to the screen and saw Trumbo directing Jason Robards and Timothy Bottoms in the lead roles. The film has since become a cult classic.

The video, done in basic black and white, is interspersed with clips from the Trumbo movie. Jason explains that this format helped capture the mood they were looking for. "Everyone has a grandfather, an uncle, a mom or dad, a brother that was in a war at one time or another, so somehow everyone can relate that to their own life."

Through simple gestures, the storyline unfolds. The band is basically standing around a rehearsal studio playing the song to each other. "One afternoon we rented out this warehouse, took our gear in there, played the song a few times with one guy running around with one camera," recalls Jason. Although the production of the video is first rate, the clips from the film are sometimes so powerful in their content that they tend to overshadow the band's performance. "I'm proud of it," says Jason, who was a little skeptical at first. "When they were doing the editing at the beginning, I said 'I don't think so, man.' But as they pieced it together, and after five weeks of full editing, I just went 'Man, this is great!'"

As for Metallica's future in video, Jason feels they'd have to come up with something "pretty damn cool" to match the production of "One." It is a classic piece of minimalist cinematography.

Metallica's massive live stage-set is something to behold as well. The imposing edifice of the Halls of Justice, with its crumbling Romanesque columns, steps and archways, provides quite a backdrop for the awesome foursome. The only distraction — a giant, white marble statue of Lady Justice, the tour's symbol. As the show progresses, her huge embodi-

ment is slowly erected from the ground up. Those who fill the arena are dressed mostly in black. There are no Greenpeace booths set up. Yet every show opens with "Blackened," the song about environmental breakdown.

"I think the next thing you'll see from Metallica will be a full live show," comments Jason. "It'll be a two and a half hour long piece of the JUSTICE tour with a few little extras thrown in."

The band has taken several acts on the road with them. Last summer, the Cult were chosen to support the heavy rockers — a choice that proved none too successful for the British outfit, who appeals to a different crowd. Queensryche, who supported Metallica before the Cult, were more suited to the bill; and the fabulous Faith No More joined up with their old friends on the western leg of their tour.

1989 was the year Metallica performed at the Grammys. This was the first time a "Heavy Metal" band was allowed this opportunity and presents further proof that the Heavy Metal genre cannot be ignored. For Jason it was a huge honor. He reflects back to when he was a little kid and watched it on TV. "I remember when I was eight or nine years old and you'd see Michael Jackson on there and all that other shit and go 'Wow, glitz. Big shit!!' Then you go there and see all these guys with headsets on bumping into each other, and you're like, 'What?' But you could still look out into the crowd and see Stevie Wonder, Joe Cocker, Iggy Pop, just every fucker, Miles Davis — and he's out there like this, snapping his fingers, and after the show he goes 'You know man, I don't understand that shit but I like it, it's different.' Thank you sir."

The CMJ Awards for new music saw the band accepting the honor for the best hard rock album of 1989. The achievement marks another for the band in the late '80s.

Looking ahead, Jason predicts Metallica has a few strong albums left in them. "Everybody's anxious to write new stuff. James is writing very much in the pattern of this last record, very slow, mid-tempo, slow-tempo crunch, really crunch. And I still write stuff really fast. So hopefully that will balance itself out. Then Lars and I talked about doing a funk thing on this next record for like four minutes at the end just to fake 'em!"

And like a rock, the band holding the iron rolls on. ♦



Thanks, Jason, for taking the time.

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SOUNDGARDEN

Interview by flower gathering Stephanie Young



Making Sound in the Garden is Jason Everman, Chris Cornell, Matt Cameron and Kim Thayil.

"I have more of a Woody Allen attitude towards these type of events," giggles Chris Cornell, the charismatic lead singer for Seattle's Soundgarden. His band just finished performing "Ugly Truth" at the CMJ New Music Awards, and in his own quiet way, Chris wanted the world to know that he was still a purist at heart. "I think the mark of achievement should be done socially rather than in this kind of setup," he says taking another swig from the Budweiser bottle. "It also depends on whose opinion you respect. If I won an award, it wouldn't mean as much to me as if, like, a close friend or peer won..."

Chris Cornell and the other three members of Soundgarden are part of the new breed of "Zen" rockers who wear their hair long, clothe themselves in "Nirvana" T-shirts, and choose to create enlightened sounds. They wear anti-yuppie threads like torn jeans and cut-offs that don't pay much attention to designer appearance.

Their music is a unique blend of echoing guitars and high rangy vocals that have brought a new category — the "Zen" tag — to the guitar-oriented rock bands of the late '80s. Although Chris doesn't think their sound is incredibly innovative, he doesn't think it's quite that pat either. "We're marrying influences that most people in music don't. Most bands release records that can be easily fitted into a genre or two. If it's a metal band, they sound exactly like a metal band,

and if it's a college alternative band, they sound exactly like a college alternative band. I think we go into a few different areas and take this into our production as well."

Chris grew up in the seventies and heard the occasional Led Zeppelin song on the radio, but by no means was he nor any of the other members of Soundgarden influenced by this paradigm of '70s rock to the point of godhead. In fact, none of the band members even owned a Led Zeppelin record back then. "When we started, a lot of people made references to '70s music — Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath — but we were listening to the current sounds of the time: the Meat Puppets, Killing Joke. That's not to say that there isn't a '70s influence, because we grew up in the '70s and you can't deny that some of that music was really cool."

It all began about five years ago in the Northwestern seaport town of Seattle. Back then, Chris was a drummer who listened to the Butthole Surfers, Black Flag, Husker Du and various other hardcore punk bands of the mid-'80s. However, it wasn't until he hooked up with two hitters from Chicago that the present Soundgarden arsenal started to evolve. The two who joined forces with Chris were guitarist Kim Thayil and former bassist Hiro Yamamoto. At first, the trio played the Seattle bar-circuit with both Chris and Kim sharing the vocal duties. This arrangement lasted about a year and a half when, finally, they decided to hire a drum-



Nancie Hemminger

Chris and the band rev up the crowd at the Ritz in New York City.

mer and thus promoted Chris to lead vocalist. The new lineup changed their sound a little and about a year later, they cut their first single for the Subpop indie label. They recorded a couple more with Subpop and then released their first album on SST Records. After, they butchered the vinyl with a respectable 12-inch dub mix of an Ohio Players song, "Flop." **LOUDER THAN LOVE** is their second Lp and their first on a major label (A&M). To longtime listeners, the album is a milestone in a career that has spanned half a decade. If they continue in this way, they'll dominate the charts and give the boards a respectable face.

Meanwhile, Chris discovered as he was writing the lyrics for "Love" that ideas came swiftly after interacting with other people. "Rather than just sit home and smoke pot, or sit home, space out and try to be creative, it was way more effective to go out and hang out with people — hang out and go see shows and have a good time and wait for something to happen. Somebody would just say something that was totally ridiculous or funny or interesting and I'd get an idea from it and it would become lyrics."

Cornell's songs are abound with themes; from the standard story about going after something you desire on "Loud Love" to the sexually charged "Full On Kev's Mom," it's safe to say that the singer refuses to pigeonhole himself into one bias essay.

Over the years, the group has developed an innate sense of cutting through the bullshit and easily puts credible ideas down on vinyl. The humorous "Big Dumb Sex" is a response, perhaps, to the "Saturday Night Fever" craze that shook us up (and down) in the mid-'70s. The song is a sarcastic parody of black music and white disco, and unashamedly pokes fun at the redundant use of sexual innuendos in that style of music.

Other cuts on the album connote more serious matters and sometimes even small misunderstandings. An example of a misintended metaphor, one that had some people believe

that Chris had committed a crime of passion, is found on "Hands All Over." It seems a certain line in the song, the one that says "You're gonna kill your mother," was foolishly mistaken for matricide. If one listened closely to the words and looked one step beyond their literal translation, they would discover its true meaning, which simply states that we're ruining our environment and if we keep destroying her, there won't be any place for animals or humans to exist.

"Hands All Over" is followed by the metal brandishing of "Gun," a slow/fast maneuver that takes you through the back alleys of the mind and displays the group's early hardcore influence. "It's almost an anti-hippy song," says Chris, who enigmatically looks the model flower child with his long hair and carefree dress. "If things aren't going the way you see it or too many people are getting fooled, rather than sit around and meditate, go out and kick some head and change things."

Maybe Chris' message is also do something constructive instead of shaving your head, beating up Jews, and languishing in self-indulgent ignorance. The singer is quick to state that he's not promoting violence in the song but rather a common human urge. "Everyone has moods where they want to beat their boss' head in with an aluminum bat." But few of us actually go through with it, opting to suppress our anger instead of allowing it to surface.

Although the band has received some criticism, Chris doesn't think it's irresponsible to let certain feelings out. "Everybody has sexual moods that they probably wouldn't act on and everyone has violent moods that they probably wouldn't act on, but it's part of everyone's life and part of how everyone feels day to day." The track's raw honesty and thoughtful straightforwardness stands for everything the singer believes in. "I would sure hate to edit all that out and release songs with lyrics that the whole world should follow as an example — like U2. That's not what we're about at all." Know thy self.



Thanks Chris — we're in Nirvana.

Like many of his listeners, Chris feels **LOUDER THAN LOVE** is their best record to date. But still, a writer's work is never done, and as we speak, he talks of new material. A prolific and skilled songwriter, he takes care and many hours developing his craft. "I like to write a lot. I like to have time at home just to think about music. That's probably my favorite part about it, but I like to play live too."

The band recently toured Europe for two months. Their itinerary included England, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Austria and Italy — the part of Europe where the West is only a hop, skip and a jump away to the nearest McDonald's and many people speak English as a second language. Surprisingly, this total lack of "country" was a big disappointment to the arsenal, who expected a foreign clime to seduce them on the other side of the Atlantic. "The only time it was really different was in this one town in Italy," recalls Chris. "It was in southern Italy, a coastal town, sort of a port. There was no tourism there so it was very Italian and that was pretty amazing. I expected it to be like that all through Europe and it really wasn't and it'll probably be less and less that way."

In light of recent Eastern European developments, the authorities in the western spur are talking of dropping all country borders so that it will be much easier for travelers to pass from "state" to "state." This move will encourage more tourists to visit those countries and thus bring in more revenue and spread the Black Death of homogenization.

Meantime, back home in Seattle, the current music scene which sprouted Soundgarden is growing to amazing proportions. The crop of bands currently coming out of the harbor town are getting huge press all over the country — a strange phenomenon considering the fact that there aren't many clubs where bands can play on a regular basis. Washington has very strict drinking laws. "You end up playing a lot of bars and that's a total drag," laments Chris. "There's a huge audience of people under twenty-one."

On the other hand, it's far removed from the glitter and glamour of Los Angeles, a place that Chris openly despises for its superficiality and pretentious "pecking order."

"That's where all the beautiful people go. People are really into who's who there. It's pretty disgusting, because who gives a shit about belonging to anything in particular.

If you don't have your own club or you're not happy with your own thing then you're a worthless piece of shit as far as I'm concerned."

Chris is more comfortable with the "real" atmosphere of New York, a town which he claims as his second favorite after Seattle. The vibe of the city appeals to this traveling minstrel. "The people are more human there, they have more of an attitude, yes, but at least it's more straightforward and direct (opposed to L.A.'s elite.)"

Most of Chris' non-musical influences stem from this ongoing relationship with individuals, so it makes sense that he should find the colorful assortment of New Yorkers appealing. His music is a mirrored reflection of how one man like himself fits into a society and how he incorporated all the intellectual and physical emotions of that environment onto vinyl.

Fans also play a major role in Chris' sphere. He hopes to meet many of them on tour. He explains that meeting his audience allows him to get a fresh perspective on things and does indeed provide one of the more positive aspects of being on the road. The negative side is not having your own bed, cat and dog along. After this tour, Chris plans on settling back into the realm of Seattle life. His spacious house by the water is a haven where he does most of his writing. He boasts about the low rent and beautiful location — two big advantages over the smog and cramped, high-priced living quarters offered to dwellers in bigger cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco.

We'll also get to see the video for "Loud Love." Chris is confident that it will get MTV airplay. There was a video made for "Get On The Snake," but as it turned out way below par, it will never be released. Earlier videos of the band will probably resurface as the band's popularity grows. One called "Flower" strikes a few curious chords; the audio version can be found on the band's debut Lp.

And so, out with the old and in with the new — the decade of the ninties has dawned, and with it has come the colorful sounds of a musical garden. 🌸

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Strange Boutique



Interview by Syd Thomas
Photos by Chris Vincent

I first saw Strange Boutique two years ago at D.C. Space, a small Washington night club. Since then, I've watched them grow into one of the major forces behind the D.C. music scene. In the past year, they've toured the U.K. with Killing Joke, released a four song Ep, and won an award from the Washington Area Music Association (WAMA) for the best alternative / underground band.

The group is Monica Richards on vocals, Fred Smith on guitars, Steve Willett on bass, and Danny Ingram on drums. (All four were present for this interview at a restaurant just before their show headlining at the 9:30 Club.)

PROPAGANDA: Tell us about your support dates for Killing Joke.

MR: When Killing Joke played here in D.C., we were offered the opening spot.

DI: The mix between our music and theirs was good, and we hit it off well with them. A promoter in Pittsburgh liked the idea of putting us together again.

MR: After the show in Pittsburgh, I walked up to Jaz and inquired about opening spots in Europe. He thought we were good and was very open to the idea.

DI: Jaz and Martin invited us to their show in N.Y. to talk about it. At the party afterwards, Jaz offered us some dates in England.

FS: So we got it all together and hooked up with Phil Ames, who plays with Certain Generals and road manages for the Fall.

SW: Phil set up everything for us in the U.K., including hiring equipment and transportation.

FS: And getting us drunk everyday! (Laughter)

SW: We went over there about a year ago and played our first date in Manchester. It was great.

MR: That show went incredibly well, but before the London gig, Killing Joke warned us that their home audience might be hard on us if they found out we were American, as it was unknown and all — they might throw stuff at us...

SW: But just the opposite happened. They loved us! People were dancing and whooping, and when we did "Song From Under The Floorboards" (Magazine song), they were singing along.

MR: Yeah, Killing Joke were shocked. Martin said that he couldn't believe how well we were accepted, and they wanted us to play in France as well, but alas we couldn't.

Why not?

DI: We already had our return tickets plus some dates in Washington, so we had to decline.

Did everything go smoothly otherwise?

DI: Not totally. We had problems with Federal Express. We couldn't get our own equipment or any records over, so we had to rent everything, but Phil took great care of us.

MR: I'll never forget seeing Fred with an opalescent pink guitar! (Laughter)

FS: But Phil saved our asses man. He's a fucking god.

So how is the Ep doing?

SW: Great! We just got distribution from Caroline Records and it's selling really well here in D.C.

FS: We're getting a lot of airplay around here and a lot of support from local deejays.

I've heard the Ep, and even though I'm familiar with your music, I was still very impressed. Did you record it around here or out of town?

MR: We recorded the 12-inch at Blackpond Studios in Maryland and produced it ourselves. The songs were chosen from two or three different sessions.

DI: We've got some time off coming up, so we plan to record some new material soon.

How does Strange Boutique write their songs?

FS: We all have a hand in it, but a lot of them are started by Danny's drumbeats. I work best with drummers.

SW: Sometime's I'll get an idea and work it out on my four track at home. When it's finished, I bring it to rehearsal and and they'll butcher it till you can't recognize it. (Laughter)



The haunting vocals of Monica R.

Who writes the lyrics?

MR: I write all of the lyrics.

DI: Most of the lyrics, thank you very much.

MR: Mostly all of the lyrics.

What are your songs generally about?

MR: They're stories, mainly. Hard to explain. "Scar On Her Back," for example, is about the very moment a person learns to trust someone else.

Is there any meaning behind the band's name?

DI: Well, Monica and I used to be in a band called Madhouse, but Prince put out an album under that name about a year after we had released our own Lp and single. So we got a lawyer who negotiated a sale of the name to Prince, but in accordance with the contract, we had to choose a new name before we'd get the check. I was playing the Monochrome Set album, "Strange Boutique," and Monica looked at the name and said, "that's it."

You've had some interest from major labels, but the strangest encounter had to have been with Kim Fowley. How'd you meet him and what happened as a result of that meeting?

DI: Well, Kim had worked with the Runaways, Germs and Kiss as a producer, manager, or whatever. He also recorded a few albums on his own.

FS: We were playing D.C. Space. The place was jam packed and the crowd was out of control.

MR: They kept screaming for encores. They wouldn't let us off the stage.

SW: Kim turned up and when he saw us and saw the crowd, he smelled money.

MR: After the show, he invited us and our crew out to dinner, fourteen people in all. He told us who he was, who

continued on p.32



Neil Zlozower

Buccaneers by the Bay (l-r): Frankie Wilsey, Ron Yocom, Chris Schlosshardt, Adam Maples.

The Sea Hags Set Sail

Wendy Weisberg

With the force of a San Andreas trembler, something shook the San Francisco music scene right out of its sound sleep one spring day in 1985. With a ripple effect, the shock waves spread out in all directions grabbing the attention of music industry people throughout the country. At the epicenter of the commotion was a newly formed, psychedelic, blues-based, hard rock band known as the Sea Hags. The interest in them erupted into open warfare between competing record labels battling for the band's affection. The fight between Chrysalis Records and Rick Rubin of Def American to sign the Hags will go down in the annals of rock history as one of the great bidding wars of all time. Even though Chrysalis came out on top, everyone wanted a piece of this hot property, whose persona and musical style conjures their namesake — the Sea, with all its power, danger and mystery. Hopping on the Hags juggernaut was producer extraordinaire Mike Clink, fresh off his triumphs with Guns N' Roses' *APETITE FOR DESTRUCTION* and Metallica's *...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL*.

The Sea Hags' fire is fueled by the dynamic duo who formed the group, Ron Yocom, lead vocals/rhythm guitar and Chris Schlosshardt, bass/vocals. With one sizzling LP already under their studded belts, the Sea Hags now look to the boundless horizon to explore what may lie ahead. All aboard!

PROPAGANDA: How did the Chrysalis deal come about?

RY: We were playing a show at the Fog in Seattle, and John Carter saw us. He was a Chrysalis A+R man, a very

cool guy. He's the one who wrote "Incense and Peppermint." He thought we were good songwriters. He liked some of our tunes, dug our attitudes, and he liked me and Chris as partners.

CS: Def Jam gave us a lot of leverage in the market place to draw up a contract because they wanted us. So, we had a bidding war in New York City, and we went with Chrysalis because they're definitely the people for us. They work real well with our thing.

Sounds good. Do you guys have plans for a video, or do you have one out?

RY: We have a video out — it's called "Half The Way Valley" and it's been played on MTV a few times. Mostly on *HEADBANGER'S BALL* and the *HARD 30*.

CS: It's a good video. It was done by Doug Freal. There's a really unique and original story line. There's no bimbos or anything like that in it. You have to see it.

RY: The only people in it are Sea Hags.

So you're the only bimbos in it?

CS: Ha Ha! Boy bimbos.

RY: That's funny. Because they almost had a girl sitting next to me in this car for a few moments, and I was like, "I really don't want to sit next to a girl when I'm playing," ya know what I mean?

CS: They weren't gonna do that, Ron.

RY: No, really! They mentioned this to me, and I just said no. I had a Marshall Amp head in the car, and I said, "This is my girl." We're the only four people in the video; I'm

proud of that. It's a very rock video.

CS: It's a trip. It's a whole different art form. For musicians, to think about video, and to do it right, you have to present yourself in that aspect — you have to do it right. It gives you a whole other dimension of things to think about.

So has the band always been the same four people since 1985?

RY: No, no. What happened was, when we got signed to Chrysalis originally, we were a three piece. We had a drummer named Greg Lingston and he didn't really impress Mike Clink (Sea Hags album producer) as a drummer for the album, and so after we got Adam, we didn't want to go back to anything that was under his ability, so we wanted him to join. Adam and Greg know each other.

CS: What did you say to Greg in the car when we were driving to pre-production?

RY: Pre-production? We were driving to the airport.

CS: Whatever. Adam was in the car for the first time, they'd just met. This was before any personnel changes. Ron goes, "Greg, this is your replacement, Adam Maples. Adam, this is Greg." It was kinda cold.

RY: It wasn't cold. I don't think of myself as a cruel person at all. I said it just as I realized it, ya know what I mean? It was like thinking out loud.

Alright Ron, we believe you. How about a comparison between the San Francisco and Los Angeles scenes?

CS: They're like different worlds, completely. It's like two separate hemispheres are the same walnut or something.

RY: I'll tell you what S.F. is to me. Musically, it's a lot of low-key people that really like music and really like to party! [laughs] And very few of them are extremely serious about the business end of music. But, the few that are, are stellar business men and great musicians, like the Grateful Dead and Metallica. I'd like to join that kind of company someday.

CS: There's such a difference in the way people perceive things as far as image versus original ideas. Just the way they dress, it's two different worlds. It's a total rivalry. I live and work in both cities, so I get off on it completely. When I'm down here in L.A., we call S.F. "Frisco" and make fun of the people there. Then, up there, you make fun of the scene down here. And the girls, the way the girls carry themselves. In L.A. they're very professional.

RY: Hey, at least you're out of the smog in San Francisco, but it's so cold. I'm always like, [whines] "gimme a blanket! Where's my jacket?" I live in the Mission. The fog rolls in on you for an hour and then it leaves and comes back. I'm a skinny little lizard. I'm always standing by the heater.

CS: Have you ever been to S.F.? It's really wet, it's on the sea. In fact it's surrounded by the ocean. So if you have bone problems or you've got a depression disorder, it's gonna get you down. I was born and raised there pretty much. It's a lot like Europe, you know, always cloudy n' stuff. A lot of Europeans live there so it's more international in one aspect. Better cappuccino...

RY: If you're trying to work up a tan, forget it. San Francisco's also very concentrated. It's a small city; it's very limited in space. San Jose's even got more people now. Because it's surrounded by water, S.F. will always be small, which is cool. L.A. is growing like mad in every direction. It's a big mess, but I

like it. Hollywood's the best part of L.A. right now.

Where have you played out of state?

RY: We've been all over. We did the east coast and the south last summer. New York was great, it's the town to be in right now. The scene has really come back and we love it there. It's a lot like London in certain respects. We were in England over the summer also.

I want to ask you something about yesterday's show at the Whisky. How come Frankie (Wilsey, lead guitarist) doesn't sweat? All of you were dripping wet after the show, and he was sitting there cool and calm with a cigarette. He didn't have a bead of sweat on him.

RY: That's cause the only thing that moves on Frankie is his fingers. Okay, so he's lazy. He doesn't exercise. Every time I talk to the guy, he's laying down.

CS: Frankie's a guitar rock animal, and if he sweats, he sweats Kessler's fine whiskey.

RY: Frankie's the coolest. I was a fan of his before I ever rocked — before I even picked up a guitar. And Chris was aware that he was a rocker too.

CS: We should nickname ourselves The Frankies. Seriously, we're a lot different now that he's made us a four-piece band.

RY: But even as a three-piece band, we wrote two guitar parts for songs, and we'd just use multi-tracks when recording. Eventually, we wanted a fuller sound live too, so we needed another guitarist.



Neil Zlozower



Ian Astbury of the Cult, Ron Yocom, and Stephen Percy of Ratt after the Sea Hags show at the Whisky.

Chris, what's your favorite club to play and why? I assume it's in San Francisco.

CS: No, actually I play there so much I'm burnt out on San Francisco. It's really refreshing getting to other cities. Of all the clubs I've played, my favorite right now is probably the Whisky. Last night was such a good show, so well-balanced. It has a certain feel to it, you can tell, it's in the walls, it just permeates the place. It has a history, and that guy who runs it was really cool. It just was a good time. So right now, I'm stoked on the Whisky.

Great, that's my favorite club, too.

CS: Yeah, three stories of people. It's like this class system almost. You have basic fans on one level, people who want to get backstage on the next level, and then you have the people who don't wanna be backstage but are. So, architecturally speaking, it was a real sound club. I think the Pyramid Club in New York City is fun because I've had a lot of good times there, and I got to play there after I moved back to San Francisco from New York. There's a lot of rich history there too. I'm more into that esoteric aspect of clubs. I mean, it's a feel.

Ron, what's your favorite club to play?

RY: My favorite club to play? I really wanted to play the Whisky for a very long time, all my rock n' roll career, and we played it last night — that was an accomplishment. I really enjoyed it, and it was packed. Fun as hell.

CS: Whisky? Wow, two votes for the Whisky. Great! I'm glad we got to play it. Thank you, Gary Tobar.

RY: Yes, Goldenvoice, cool. We did it. We've done the Roxy a couple of times and that was cool and very thrilling. It's a good club and we did it with Johnny Thunders and everything. He's a good friend of ours, so that made it even better. Back in 1980, the Whisky used to be kind of like the Roxy with all the stairs up top with railings and stuff. A whole old saloon type thing. And then they cleared it out like a warehouse, partly, and left it upstairs.

So who would you really like to play with now?

RY: Well, I'm really into the Cult right now.

CS: We were supposed to be on the road with them this past summer, but they hooked onto the Metallica tour.

RY: Ian came and saw us last night. He likes our band. I'm so proud of that.

He was there? OH! Everyone sees him but me, even when we're both at the same gig.

CS: He's a fan of ours, and we really dig the Cult, so we're still talking about going on the road with them.

RY: Their album, **SONIC TEMPLE**, was in the top ten for awhile. I love it; I play it all the time. "American Horse," "Edie!" Doesn't it sound like "Bohemian Rhapsody" a little?

CS: "Edie's" the new single.

I think they should do "New York City" as a single.

RY: NYC! "Hell's Kitchen, it's a crazy place." It's bitchin'.

CS: Yeah, I just talked to Ian last night. They're gonna do "Sweet Soul Sister" as a single next.

RY: That's a great song, and so is "American Horse."

CS: We're all excited about that.

So that would probably answer my next question about your favorite releases over the past year.

RY: Yes, the Cult, definitely. And I like Metallica's **...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL** a lot. **DANZIG** is a great record. It has that weird stiffness, but I think that's on purpose. It has a lot of vocal. It almost sounds like a 1972 retrospective thing.

CS: Old Sabbath. It's total Sabbath, mon.

RY: The songs are really good, the arrangements are real good, the singing is really good.

So much for Glenn and the boys, what do you think is the Sea Hags appeal? What singled you out from the other bands on the S.F. or L.A. scenes?

RY: I would say a charismatic connection between Chris and myself is a very big part of it, probably the whole thing.

CS: That's it, man. In a nutshell. Basically, that is what I would attribute it to because it's just a chemistry, it's something that works, a working combination.

Do you feel this kind of connection with the other guys in the band?

RY: Oh, absolutely. But it's not quite as strong. It's a good partnership, and the connection with Frankie and Adam is great and growing every day. But Chris and I have known each other for nine years, and we've been playing music together for a long time.

CS: I'll tell you, this is cool man; it's starting to feel like a community, which you had in the '60s and '70s, where it's a bunch of new kids on the block who have a lot of clout and can pretty much call the shots in a lot of ways. It's a comradery among all these up n' coming rock bands.

How 'bout that Sea Hags logo [I point to the one on the wall in the Chrysalis office]. It's really cool.

CS: I love that logo. Just look at it. Rick Griffin designed it. He's done every beautiful logo you've ever seen. He's done the Grateful Dead, the Cult, even the Beatles. He'll probably do our next album also.

RY: You've been to San Francisco, right? Just imagine driving through that H in Hags right there. Doesn't it remind

continued on p.45



"Half The Way Alley" with the Sea Hags in Sacramento, CA.

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photo: Kelly Barbieri/model: Liza



That's Life In HOLLYWOOD!

Fred Berger



Duff drinks up at Coconut Teaser.

Michelle Breiner



Jamie Stewart of The Cult.



Taylor King

The Junkyard gang roams Hollywood Blvd.



Jeffrey Katz

Kelly and Phil of L.A. Guns mug it up.



Fred Berger

Xan of Shrine, Ivan the doorman and Angela Jones party it up in the Coconut Teaser patio.

Wendy Weisberg



Mike and Jason of the very Dangerous Toys.

Kathy Lynchard



The Sea Hags do the Limo thang.

Michelle Breiner



Sweet Soul
Brother Ian of
The Cult (left).



'The Method'
watercolor by
S. Young
(right).



Mario Castellanos

Bryan Small of the Hangmen hangs.



Princess Pang's Jeni Foster and Wendy W.



BANG TANGO

Wendy
Weisberg

The method bands use to get ahead in L.A. has become as routine as the bands themselves. The procedure has become almost ritualistic — hand out loads of flyers, mail out loads of demos, take out loads of ads in Rock City News, and pay out loads of cash to play in the numerous rock clubs along Sunset Blvd. It has become a rite of passage for all the bands trying to emerge from the overcrowded L.A. rock scene — all except one — Bang Tango. This power laden quintet never had to perform this banal ritual. They only had to perform live once before A+R reps from MCA to secure a major record deal. They never even recorded a demo!

Bang Tango's approach to getting ahead was as unique as their music. They presented themselves as a national act

(which they were) rather than a local L.A. band. Their music was more closely akin to New York grunge than L.A. glam, which consequently resulted in huge sell-out crowds at their New York shows this past fall. The raw energy this band generates has been successfully captured on their introductory Ep LIVE INJECTION and debut Lp PSYCHO CAFE.

I recently caught up with the five Bangers — Joe Leste' (vocals), Kyle Stevens (guitar), Mark Knight (guitar), Kyle Kyle (bass) and Tigg Ketler (drums) — on their tour bus during the west coast swing of their last tour.

PROPAGANDA: Do you think that being a band from Los Angeles has had any adverse effects on Bang Tango?

JT: Not a bit. Because, first of all, we don't consider our-



Brad Branson



Dana Frank

selves a "band from L.A." We consider ourselves a band of fate or something. We came from all different places — San Diego, New Jersey, L.A. — and we met up here. We only spent a year playing all these places, and then we did our own thing. So I really don't think that's going to have an adverse effect on us, especially since we've already played New York, and they took to us really well. So we don't look at it as a setback or even as an added attraction. We look at it like "we're Bang Tango." We formed here in L.A., but that's not going to hold us back or push us further. People say "you don't even seem like you're from L.A."

You got signed in under a year. Did this take a shorter time than you expected?

MK: True, it did happen really fast for us, but we totally believed in ourselves as a band, and as the band developed, we felt that we deserved to get signed when we did. It was exciting, but we expected it, actually.

Usually bass players aren't asked about their influences. Since bass seems to be such an important part of the band's sound, can you tell me who influenced or inspired you, Kyle?

KK: Well, yeah. Originally, when I was a kid, Rush. Geddy Lee was my main idol. But nowadays, with the band, I would say Flea from the Red Hot Chili Peppers by far, because of the funk type influences I'm trying to put in. But still Geddy Lee and a bunch of the original guys. There's not too many, really. I respect a lot of bass players, like Billy Sheehan, but I don't have influences really from those kind of players.

The L.A. band scene is so expensive. How could you afford "pay to play"? I read somewhere that you played 70 gigs in nine months. How did you do that?

KS: We only fell into that trap once, on our very first show. It's impossible for bands to break out without the pay to play thing. We tried to do that at first and then it just got ridiculous, 'cause as you said, it is expensive to play and we couldn't afford it. We did it once, and after that, we said "no way." We couldn't even afford a demo tape.

So where did you play?

KS: We were playing anywhere we could, from the Coconut Teaszer to White Trash, anywhere. And then it turned around after awhile — they started paying us to play, the way it should be.

Your video is all over MTV; people know your mugs now. Are you scared in anyway of huge success — the things that come with it, such as loss of identity or privacy? Joe, why are you smirking?

JL: Because, when I hear questions like that, I'd like to answer them. And the answer is NO, absolutely not. We're not afraid of it at all, but we will still keep out mystique. We're not going to be over-publicized. We're going to keep our mystique, just like the Rolling Stones, Aerosmith, Zepplin. People always want to find out these new little things about us. We're a rock n' roll band and we're definitely not afraid of that. When we're playing shows like this one at Whisky, sold out, I gotta admit, I spend a lot of time in this bathroom over here. But that's just anticipation and nerves and stuff.

KS: We never intended to be a real marketable band. We do this because it's the music we want to play. We're not trying to be recognized as a corporate product which a lot of bands become. We just put the thing together and said we're going to write the material the way we want to write it — the songs and the music we grew up on. We didn't start writing to get a record deal; we did it to satisfy ourselves and that's the bottom line.

JL: Of course, everyone wants a fucking record deal, 'cause you want to be heard, you want your art to get exposure. But when we write songs, we only think about satisfying our creative goals. Like what Kyle was saying, we wanted to put something out and us to be satisfied with it at the same time. You know what I mean? I want to be able to look at you and other people and go "our rock n' roll kicks ass; our rock n' roll has balls; we didn't get castrated when we got a record deal." We still stuck to what we wanted to do, that's why the music on the album changes so much from song to song. Kyle would come in with an idea, and it would sound one way, then Mark would come in with some different, or Tigg, or me, whatever. And so it has all these different influences. It has some variety, some spice.

What do you think about this so-called "[Sunset] strip scene" out here in L.A.? What do you like or dislike about it?

MK: I really don't like it because so many bands come here

and it's like a melting pot for all the bands in the United States. Everybody comes here and they promote the hell out of this town, and they strip it with flyers, and they think "I'm movin' to L.A.; I'm the happenin' band in my small town, and I'm gonna come here and be the baddest band in Hollywood." Then they come here and promote the shit out of the fuckin' Strip, and they expect to be big off it. I really don't like it because I grew up in this town and I'm used to playing here and that's it. I don't like it at all, really.

KS: Well, the positive thing about the Strip is that there's no place like it, really, in the world. It's a great place for a band to get out and play and all that. But, it's gotten to the point where everyone's cloning everyone else. Everyone dresses the same, plays the same music, etc. Once in awhile there will be a band with an original vein in them to cut through, but it's getting rare.

TK: I think of it as being some kind of big factory. It's good because it offers a lot. It's a place of tolerance — you get out of it what you put into it. But the sad thing is that looking at it from the outside, you see how ugly it can be on the inside. But like he says, sometimes a good thing can come out of it, and it's up to us to try and prove that to everybody.

KK: I don't give a shit either way. I mean, it's like, what is the Strip, what is the scene? Who cares, who cares.

JL: Myself, I look at it differently. I look at it as more of a "school" of rock n' roll, and this is the main hallway. Everybody's walking around and it's a big high school of rock n' roll. Everybody passes back and forth and talks about what's going on in class. I'm not a part of the scene or the Strip, I just played here. More power to 'em. I think it's cool if people are all down here passing out flyers and doing something. It's like a giant sport, where everyone's playing football or baseball and they want you to come root for their team. I think that's cool. It's better than having them all sit there on the Strip and lean up against the walls doing drugs or something. Not to say they don't. And it's a great place to meet girls. We never flyer'd though. Our band never flyer'd down the Strip — it just wasn't us.

TK: There's a stigma that goes along with L.A., just like any other city. Hollywood just has this outrageous reputation for being Hollywood, but it's so much smaller, actually, than a lot of other places. We've been to New York, which is so much bigger and its scene stretches over a lot of miles. The Strip is just one road, and it's like Joe said, a student union. "I gotta go to my locker!"

JL: Girls get all fixed up, guys get all duded out to come here.

TK: And the thing is, it's never gonna end. A lot of people are sick of waiting for the world to end nowadays, so they're doing new things. But at the same time, there's a lot of nut cases out here, eccentric people. It's a melting pot.

JL: The best thing though, as far as Bang Tango is concerned, is when some writer who didn't know jack shit about

us said we sounded like a band that "just hung out at the Rainbow too long and picked up a glam sound." When everyone saw that, he looked like the biggest asshole. Because first of all, people don't even think we're from L.A.; second of all, we don't even sound anything like a glam band. We're not a Sunset Strip band, and we're not Rainbow clones. We don't even go there.

Why did you release a live Ep (LIVE INJECTION) before PSYCHO CAFE came out?

JL: It kinda showed the difference between a young growing band playing live and a band going into the studio. It was basically a progression thing. Some guys offered us a chance to be on vinyl, and as a young striving band who wanted to record, we said "shit yeah, let's do it." **LIVE INJECTION** turned out to be a great way to introduce the band. Now it's selling at the Wherehouse for like fifteen or twenty bucks.

KS: It's a collector's item. ♦

Many thanks to Charity and Chip at Mechanic Records in NYC, you're way cool. Also thanks to Heather at Gold Mountain and Lauren at MCA, and of course, **BANG TANGO**.

Wendy Welsberg



Can you say "Bang Tango gang bang" three times fast?



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3RD BIG LIE

By Ty Taylor-Batirbek and Paul Hart



Dan Shiray

Here's the truth about 3rd Big Lie...

Timeless. It's the only way to describe the sound emanating from one of New York's more intelligent and talented bands, 3rd Big Lie. Whether you left your heart in San Francisco during '67's summer of love, or thrashed to the New York post-punk noise of the early '80s, or even if you have an eye out for the visionary sounds of the '90s — there's something for you in this group's collection of honest and thought-provoking songs.

Catherine Romano (vocals, bass), Randy Schweller (guitar), and Jamey Evans (drums) began playing together in the late '70s in a band called Timberwolf. The band built quite a following during its six year existence, drawing thousands of loyal fans to club and concert hall gigs all over the Tri-state area.

After Timberwolf broke up and the band members scattered, Catherine, Randy and Jamey pursued other projects. In 1987, the trio began writing original material to shop for a publishing deal. The reaction to their demo tape was so positive, however, that they decided to keep the songs for themselves and start performing the material live. Thus, 3rd Big Lie was born, and so was a truly unique and refreshing folk/rock sound that has a true Americana flavor in the tradition of REM and the Grateful Dead. The band's tasty offerings can be savored regularly at places like CBGB's, Continental Divide, Kenny's Castaways, Nightengales, etc. Keep your ear to the ground or write to us here at Propaganda for more information.

Fresh off their tour for the critically acclaimed **COCKED AND LOADED** LP, vocalist Philip Lewis and bassist Kelly Nickels of L.A. Guns reveal their best on-the-road stories, only to be interrupted by guitarist Tracii Guns with a few of his own.

PROPAGANDA: Here we are with L.A. Guns.

KN & PL: YO!

PL: Just say yo!

KN: (BELCH)

Very attractive. I'd only grade that a B. It wasn't very loud or deep.

PL: But it was a B, which is pretty good for him.

Philip, I know you're from London, but where are you from, Kelly?

KN: New York.

PL: He's from Nairobi, he's lying.

KN: I'm from Hollywood now.

PL: Yeah, we don't consider ourselves to come from anywhere but Hollywood now. Even with the accent. I mean, I know this town better than some people who were born here.

Bands often note a difference with American and English audiences when they're on tour. Do you see any differences between different regions of this country, such as East vs. West?

KN: I think it's pretty much the same. Um, New York's a tough audience though. I mean, once you get out of New York and L.A., they don't get as many bands playing. In L.A., there's fifty bands playing a night at fifty different clubs. You know, people are used to seeing bands. But in Milwaukee and shit, bands don't always go there so they appreciate it more.

PL: Ya know, the thing is, we've had good reaction pretty much all over the place.

Do you see the scene in L.A. as thriving or dying? Do you see originality or copycats emerging?

PL: I see a lot of 'pay to play' going on, ya know, when bands have to guarantee 200 tickets before they'll let them play in a place, which is kind of a drag. But then again, whatever it takes to keep clubs above water, cos if the clubs 'ain't there, then no one can play anyway. So it's kind of a catch-22, and every now and then a band gets through that.

Are there any local bands you've seen and liked?

PL: Um, Shark Island.

[Tracii Guns, who is just hanging around, joins in and yells, "Redd Kross, man!"]

You've gotten a "bad boy" image in the press, but I want to know if you're really bad. Did you ever do anything really bad when you were little boys?

TG: They smelled bad!

KN: One day I didn't go to Sunday School.

PL: I didn't brush my teeth one night before I went to bed.
(To Kelly) **Did you go out and get your tattoos the day you skipped Sunday School?**

KN: Yeah, after I fucking killed six people. Ha Ha. Ate their fucking heads. Actually, I once stole a bass amp when I was in high school. Me and two friends broke into the school and I was inside trying to push the amp cabinet through the window to my friends and it got jammed. I was like stuck in the school 'cause all the windows had, you know, gratings on them. It was really hard to get out of

L.A. GUNS

Interview by Wendy Weisberg

Photos by Jeff Katz



that. I was pretty scared.

PL: When I was a kid, we had a music contest in my grade, but nobody could play anything. Being a good English school that it was, they opened it to 2,000 kids and the Bishop of Canterbury and other music dignitaries were there. They asked if anyone wanted to try — and I shot my hand up and said, 'I play violin.' Of course, I'd never played violin in my life. So there I was, going like, EEERRR (makes screeching noise), and after about five or six seconds it became obvious. My friends knew straight away that I couldn't do it, and all of a sudden, like, the school collapsed in laughter.

KN: I did that with a piano, man! I swear to God, in piano class. Nobody could play. I went up there and I did everything. I went 'duh da duh' (imitates piano sound). I started banging on the keys and the teacher goes, 'Get the fuck outta here!'

I've always wanted to see one of your videos on MTV. Are they rotated, or is it that they just prefer to play

Bon Jovi?

KN: Well, y'know, some of the videos we do, there's always something in them that MTV doesn't like, so we usually re-edit, and then they'll play like a little bit. We have a hard time. "Electric Gypsy" we did, which is just motorcycles. They play that one a lot. And um, we did one for the ballad that's on the home video we did.

PL: It's about L.A. in general, you know, people we met while we were on tour that said, "Yeah, we're moving to L.A., yeah. It's the place for us." And it's like 80,000 people a month immigrate to Los Angeles and it's a real drag when you meet these nice country roses in the Midwest and you end up seeing them stripping in Hollywood. It's real sad.

What are your favorite parts about being on the road?

KN: Just being on the road.

PL: Sleeping at 80 miles an hour. Lying there. It's like, when I came off the road, I couldn't sleep, because, like, the room wasn't moving.

KN: Great. It's like a fuckin' year long vacation when you're on the road. I mean, you get to go everywhere and stuff.

PL: Yeah, it's great seeing places with the whole band. It's just like a school trip — you've got all your friends and it just goes on for months and months.

What do you think of groupies?

KN: Yaaay!

PL: Love 'em. Of course, y'know, it'd be miserable without them. They're an essential part of music. There's nothing wrong with them. Some of the nicest girls I've met have been groupies.

Is interaction with your fans important to you?

KN: Yeah, definitely. Ya know, we try to do good things.

PL: (Sings) Ooh, I need a dirty woman...

So do you guys have any New Year's resolutions?

PL: I'm not gonna swear no fuckin' more!

KN: I'm not gonna wipe my ass with hundred dollar bills anymore.

That's good. Look at all the money it'll save you. Do you have a favorite store in L.A. where you like to shop now that you have all this extra spending money?

PL: Yeh, Let It Rock. (Melrose Avenue, Hollywood)

KN: Let It Rock.

Wow, I can't even afford a pair of tights there.

PL: Yeah, me neither, I know.

I'm sure that's a major problem for you. Do you have any unusual collections at home?

PL: Alice In Wonderland books. Old first editions, things like that.

KN: I have a dirty panty collection in my backyard.

Do you think you have an influence on your fans?

PL: Yeah, an intoxicating influence.

KN: It's a good influence, ya know? It's not like, "Kill your mother," it's like, "Shake her up a bit."

Is there any animosity with Black Cherry? (An L.A. band fronted by Paul Black, the Guns' original singer.)

KN & PL: (Innocently) WHO??

TG: We don't know about bands that suck!

[On that note Tracii Guns takes over the interview.]

Most people ask musicians what they'd be doing if they weren't in bands. So, instead, I'll ask you what other type of music you'd be playing if you weren't playing sleazy long-haired hard rock.

TG: I'd probably be playing Motown kind of stuff, like R&B. Definitely, that's my second love.

Do you have any influences in that area?

TG: Oh man, yeah. The Temptations, Isley Brothers, Smokey Robinson, the list goes on for days. I listen to a lot of black music, a lot of R&B. James Brown, stuff like that. Sly and Family Stone is probably my favorite.

Do you have trouble with the "heavy metal" moniker that's thrown at all kinds of bands these days, such as yourself?



Big Guns — Mick, Phil, Tracii, Steve and Kelly.

TG: No, I mean, people call Zeppelin a heavy metal band. So, as long as Aerosmith's on the heavy metal charts and we are too, I guess I can't complain. I don't care what they call us, at least they're talking. Anything with distorted guitar is to most people heavy metal anyway.

Do you feel that you personally write better when you're under the influence of something?

TG: When I'm under the influence of the BLUES, yes. When I'm depressed, I write better. When I'm high, I write like a mess.

Have you ever gotten anything decent out of being high?

TG: Um, yeah. "Magdalaine."

I really like the guitars on that one, very hypnotizing.

TG: Yeah (laughing), I was there man, I saw the light.

Tell me about the band's song writing process. Does each member write his own part?

TG: Generally, I come up with most of the music first, and then everybody will put their input in during rehearsal. We'll make a tape of the music and we'll give it to Phil, and he'll take the cassette home and start writing lyrics over it, and then he'll bring back a couple of versions. Then we all talk about it, it's a pretty simple process actually. But other times, Kelly will bring in some music, or Mick, or even Steve, and we just get in the studio and bash 'em out.

Did you do any lyrics for "Magdalaine"?

TG: No, just the music. I don't do lyrics, I'm really corny.

Does Mick (rhythm guitarist) ever play lead?

TG: No.

So you're the sole guitar god of L.A. Guns. Do you think that bothers him at all?

TG: No, definitely not. He was a bass player before he played rhythm guitar, so he's really into rhythm, chopping it up, chunking it out. He's not really looking for that kind of thing. He's just happy being back there, kicking ass. Sometimes it's more difficult to play rhythm. The spotlight's on me and I gotta blow people away, and he's gotta hold it down back there. We both have our own self-satisfactions.

Besides the U.S., what country has given you the best reception?

TG: Japan, by far. We're huge over there. They're so nice



(l. to r.): Phil, our L.A. women Wendy, and trigger-happy Tracii. Thanks guys. Special thanks to a very patient Laurie at Jensen Communications!

to us over there, it's unbelievable. We're the biggest in the world in Japan.

What do you think of bands "cleaning up" these days, i.e. Motley Crue and Aerosmith?

TG: I think Aerosmith did the right thing, 'cause it got them back up on top and they're older and mature and they should be more grown up than that. They went through their years of having a good time and getting fucked up and feeling sick and learning their lesson. Motley Crue, I really have no comment, because Motley Crue to me was always... what they did outside of the music I never felt had anything to do with the music they came out with. It seemed to me that they were a lot tougher, more hardcore, when they were so called "fucked up." Motley Crue was "Shout At The Devil" and "Too Fast For Love." That's when they were just rippin' heads. Now, they're just like this simple rock n' roll band. But hey, this will be their biggest record ever, so financially I guess, they did the right thing. I'm just personally not a fan of this this record.

People like to use the word dangerous to define hard rock music. What does this mean, and does it apply to L.A. Guns?

TG: I think people like to say the word dangerous because it sounds scary, but what danger is involved? Am I gonna hit someone over the head with a guitar? Are we gonna blow somebody's ears out? What it is, it's aggressive, and we play our instruments aggressively, our songs are aggressive, and the kids go out and they get aggressive, so there's the reality of where danger comes in, but I wouldn't call it dangerous. I'd call it loud and stimulating, but definitely not dangerous, that just seems so phony.

As a musician, do you prefer playing ballads to rocking songs?

TG: I like playing our ballads, they're a little different than most, especially the new one. It's more like a country-western kind of thing. I have a lot of country influence, a lot of R&B stuff. I really enjoy playing just about everything. The only stuff I don't like to play is stuff with a really steady tempo; it gets boring really fast.

Was "Ballad of Jane" written with a special woman in mind?

TG: No, it wasn't. It was just something we noodled around with. It turned into a who's who of people — anyone who goes to the big city to try to make it and then all of a sudden it's over and they're dead. It's basically about people who have their moment in the spotlight and then disappear.

What's your favorite hobby that's entirely non-music related?

TG: Surfing. I used to compete when I was younger. It keeps me in shape.

On the new album, I really dug "I'm Addicted." Are you going to do more things like that in the future?

TG: I'm sure I will. That's kind of my forte, just jamming. That's what I'm best at.

Was your family supportive of you as you were growing up, getting into music, and growing your hair?

TG: Well, they never had a problem with my hair 'cause they're hippies. They always wanted my hair to be real long. They kinda freaked out when I got into punk and cut it all off. They've always been real supportive, they're into it, they love it. So, no problems there.

When you're in the audience, who's your favorite live band?

TG: Redd Kross, by far. They're the best; nobody comes close to them live, nobody.

What's your favorite club in Hollywood?

TG: Probably the Red Light District, it's pretty cool.

Hey, Jimmy Thrill of Rattlesnake Shake is one of the owners of that. What's the last album you purchased?

TG: I just got two — Living Colour and Temptations Greatest Hits.

It must be amazing to be onstage in front of hundreds or thousands of adoring fans, screaming, because you to them are absolute godhead. That must be an amazing feeling.

TG: Oh, it is.

How does that feeling, that high, compare to sex? Is it equal, is it better, or does it not even come close?

TG: It depends on the sex. If I had to make a choice between the two, I'd play on stage. I had to think about it for a minute, but I definitely would. Anyway, being on stage is a lot safer. It's something I can't live without. ♦

STRANGE BOUTIQUE continued

he had discovered, and that he could make us rock stars. He said we'd look good on MTV.

DI: He gave us a recording contract that basically would have turned us into indentured servants, and our lawyer, Bobby Keene, said the contract was very unfair to the artist and to wait for something better. So we parted ways with Mr. Fowley.

MR: He didn't take it well either. (Laughter)

What interests do you have outside the band?

MR: Well, as part of the band, I design the T-shirts and flyers, which are mostly original artwork. I also paint, and I've had my work displayed around D.C. Most of my paintings are life-size and partially 3-dimensional. I've sold a few pieces already.

DI: I really enjoy films and reading; John Cleese is one of my favorite people, and it's been a dream of mine to get the band in a movie of his. If that doesn't happen, my second choice would be to get on "Married With Children."

SW: We rehearse on Sundays, but we always stop to watch "Married With Children." Great show. But when I'm not playing with the band, I like spending time at home writing music for myself.

FS: I like trashy women, drinking, and seeing bands, so I got a job at the 9:30 Club and all my needs are taken care of.

On that note, I'd like to wish you all the success you deserve. In the meantime, pick up the band's Ep on Bedazzled Records and watch out for their touring dates. You can reach them for bookings, records and T-shirts at: Strange Boutique, P.O. Box 39195, Wash. D.C. 20016



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A black and white photograph of a classical building, possibly a museum or government building, featuring tall columns and a pediment. The scene is viewed through a dark, irregular frame that resembles a window or a doorway. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

THINGS TO COME

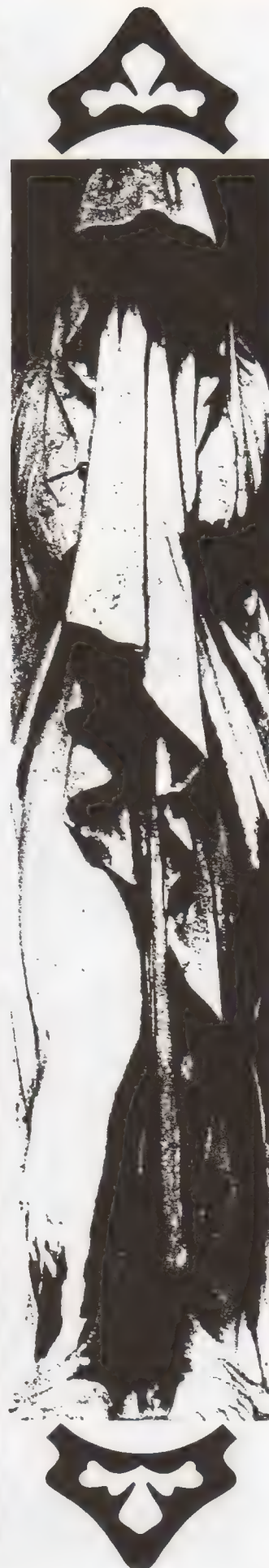
A LOOK TO THE FUTURE
Photography by Fred Berger



Propaganda is always preparing for the future. As we speak, issue #15 is in production. And as you can see from this page, we are preparing for a shocker of a magazine. There will be fascinating articles like "The Children's Crusade" and "Countess Elizabeth Bathory: Vampire Women Of The Carpathians," both complete with chilling photos. Also, there will be blockbuster interviews with The Mission, Ministry, Mike Monroe, The Cult, Love & Rockets, etc. We'll have plenty of other interesting tidbits for you to munch on as well. So join us for a journey into uncharted territory with Propaganda #15 due out soon.



models: John + Tia





Kloster-phobia

Issue #15 will feature the hauntingly beautiful images of one of New York's most talented photographers, Doris Kloster. Her dream-like work is heavy on atmosphere and can be found regularly in FAD Magazine.



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YOUTHQUAKER



TRANSVISION VAMP'S

WENDY JAMES



INTERVIEW BY STEPHANIE YOUNG

Wendy James of Transvision Vamp evokes the '60s in looks as well as ideals.

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes."

— Lord Byron

In ancient Greece, the myth of Pandora's Box was equivalent to that of the serpent's tempting apple in the story of Adam and Eve. Pandora was warned not to open the sealed box (originally a jar). She disobeyed and consequently released all of man's suffering with a twist of the lid. The story comes to mind after speaking to Wendy James, the devastatingly beautiful and equally intelligent singer from England's pop sensation, Transvision Vamp.

Many pop stars have advocated the "Green issue", but none have done it with as much relish (in recent years) as Ms. James. The topic is active in her songs, her published articles, and more importantly, here today as we speak.

Wendy James is makeup-less (although still beautiful) and sits casually across from me in her publicist's small, no-nonsense office. Draped around her petite, heart-shaped shoulders is a leather bomber jacket. Her blonde hair is cropped short, and today, a headband holds back loose frays. To get acquainted, she displays her new mountain boots atop the oak desk, then tells me the stealth bombers were purchased a few days ago in L.A. She lights up a long, thin cigarette and

inhales deeply. For a moment, she becomes Edie Sedgwick. Then exhales back into Wendy again. A talkative gal, who quickly sputters her answers in elaborate, south London English. We talk about her first album, **POP ART**, glide through her second, **VELVETEEN**, then slowly drift to the influences that fuel her private thoughts and public persona.

Wendy's interest in things "Green" started early on. It was in a high school ecology class that she first became aware of our senseless destruction of the environment. When a person becomes well versed in a particular subject, especially one they decide to give their heart and soul to, the subject finds its way into almost every aspect of that person's life. And so was the natural course for Wendy. She became a vegetarian and started reading up on these and other dire subjects, regularly. In due time, her thoughts found their way onto vinyl, most notably on two of the group's early songs, "Revolution Baby" and "Sister Moon." Wendy explains that the songs are about change in yourself and how we can make the world a better place for our children.

If this sounds a tad self-indulgent, it's coming from a woman who speaks her mind. "I'm not on some big crusade to make everyone know about certain wrongs in the world. It's just how I choose to live my life. I don't want to feel as though I'm contributing to the destruction of the planet. It's for selfish reasons. I want to have a clear conscience."

Although Wendy claims her reasons are selfish, she'll explain that when she was just a youngin' going to high school (she's now 23) and getting picked on by the school bully, music people like Joe Strummer, John Lydon and Chrissie Hynde helped her believe in herself. Recently, she wrote an article that appeared in the popular British teen magazine **Number One**. The article, printed in Wendy's own handwriting, spoke to "kids" about the destruction of the environment.

"Quite frankly," she says, "if I were a young child reading **Smash Hits** right now, I'd rather read about what I was saying about Greenpeace, than about what Duran Duran just bought. Popstars can give you the courage to go on and believe in something. Parents, teachers, and politicians just keep you down."

Then again, the present breed of popstars don't really give a damn about anything except big bank accounts and cocaine parties. "Nowadays," she adds, "there are very few people who are setting a good example for young people. Most popstars just care about making money, politicians just want your vote, and parents just want you to tidy up your room. People like Clint Eastwood and Joe Strummer did set examples and said, 'Look, I came from nothing and made something of myself, and you can too.' We need more of that."

Transvision Vamp's latest Lp is entitled **Velveteen**. The name is taken from one of Wendy's favorite bands, The Velvet Underground. She says the whole Factory thing appealed to her because for just a little while, those people ruled the world. "I kinda thought the Factory scene here in New York was a '60s version of the Punk thing that happened in England. It was very anarchic, those people did exactly what they wanted. I also think Andy Warhol's sense of humor was one to be admired. I think he took the piss out of a great many people who were otherwise very confident!"

Little Miss Sedgwick was another one of her obsessions. When Wendy was 18, her dream was to look like

the **Vogue** "Youthquaker" Miss Edie. "She was bone thin, rich and beautiful," says Wendy, "wore huge earrings and hung out with Bob Dylan." Soon the dream faded, however, and reality set in. "To a teenager, that was very glamorous. But as I got older, I realized that she was just a crazy drug addict who came from a rich background." Wendy pays homage to her broken idol in recent **Velveteen** photo sessions.

A blonde named Marilyn Monroe also captivated her. Marilyn's beauty and association with Arthur Miller held Wendy's attention right away. But after reading more and more about the flaxen-haired siren, the attraction went a soul deeper. "It must've been hard in the '50s to be a person like Marilyn Monroe, where you had your own ideas, and thought for a laugh you'd look beautiful in one movie and it was so successful that the business trapped you into looking like that for all your movies, and the world loved you so much that you could never escape it." Her personal life, as Wendy explains, was no picnic either. "On top of that, you're insecure. And each time you fell in love, men left you."

Wendy points out that certain aspects of Monroe's life affect all women. "Whether it's a boyfriend leaving you or having to look a certain way, women are expected to act accordingly in a male dominated society. If you're wise, you won't bow down to any of those rules." She found some of the same shortcomings in Edie Sedgwick. "She wanted to be so popular that she never stopped to look around and realize that none of it meant anything. Physically, I think both are perhaps two of the most attractive women that ever lived, but I don't want to live my life by them."

Wendy's philosophy is that life is very simple: all you have to do is believe in yourself and the battle is halfway won. She attributes her own success and piece of mind to the fact that she was fortunate enough to have grown up around good people who gave her the confidence to stand her ground and believe in herself. ~



In 1965, **Vogue Magazine** chose Edie S. (left) as "Youthquaker of the Year."

In 1990, no longer is such a distinction awarded. But if it was, Wendy J. (right) would make a worthy successor to Miss Sedgwick's title.

Faith No More

Interview and photos by Sherri Durrell



Mike Patton, Mike Bordin, Jim Martin and Roddy Bottum keep the faith.

Faith No More have always been one of my favorite bands. Hailing from San Francisco myself, you might say I consider them my homeboys. Anyhow, I met with Jim Martin (guitarist extraordinaire), Roddy Bottum (keyboard wizard), Mike Patton (new singer with a voice to die for) and bassist Bill Gould (who didn't say much). These guys rock, have style, have class and kick ass. Buy their latest record, *THE REAL THING* (Slash/Warner), if you want to hear what's really happening in rock today. And see them live, if you have any taste at all.

PROPAGANDA: You guys played with Metallica last fall, it must have been exciting.

JM: Yeah, it was great.

It must have been a real change.

RB: For us, yeah. Those were the biggest crowds we ever played to. We'd been on tour for like a month before we started up with Metallica, and like the first show we played with them was already to more people than on our whole tour before then.

JM: Yeah, I'd say we played to about 10,000 every night.

It must have been a trip walking out there in front of that many people for the first time.

RB: Yeah, real exciting.

JM: I was scared.

Were you? How was the response from the crowd?

JM: It was pretty good. It was a Metallica crowd, definitely, but the response was pretty good.

Have you played Europe with your new singer yet, cos I know you were pretty big over there with Chuck.

JM: Yeah, we were over in England for like a week to kick off the release of the new record. It came out when we were over there and we did like five dates and then came back. And now we're going to go over there again for six weeks.

Do you guys still live in San Francisco?

JM: Yeah, pretty much everyone was still up there when we left on tour. We'll see what happens when we get back.

How long have you guys actually been together?

RB: About five and a half years.

And Chuck left...?

RB: Almost two years ago.

JM: It wasn't working out anymore. He had other things

that he wanted to do, and we couldn't provide him with what he wanted. That's pretty much what happened.

It's unusual for a band to replace a singer, and have it work out so well.

RB: I understand that. I mean, when bands switch singers, it's a real bold move. But it's really worked for the better. We're all into it, and I haven't talked to anyone, even friends of the band or friends of Chuck's who were into the band before, that have any problems dealing with the new singer.

I think the new record (*THE REAL THING*) is fantastic. It's really diverse.

JM: It's pretty much due to our varying influences. Everybody in the band likes different stuff.

RB: It was good this time around. We were just a lot more lenient with ourselves as far as letting everyone do their own thing. So everyone got to kind of put in their two cents, and get a sound that we wanted to, instead of sticking to just one thing.

It sounds like a much more relaxed atmosphere than your other records.

RB: Definitely, yeah. And Mike, the new singer, has a lot of diversity. He can sing pretty much any way.

Jim, your guitar solo on "War Pigs" is great.

JM: Thanks. We've been playing it live for a long time. We went in the studio and said, "Well, as long as we're here, we might as well record it." It was easy to record and we did it real quick. And it ended up sounding real good.

RB: And it was always a show stopper live.

Yeah, and it would give a new audience something to identify with.

JM: Absolutely!

RB: And we'd never recorded a cover before.

On this tour, are you playing stuff off your previous records, or just the new one?

RB: With the Metallica thing, the only one we did off those records was "We Care A Lot." It's the one song that I think people who have heard of us before are familiar with. But we try to stick mostly with the new stuff everyone's more comfortable with. I mean, the old stuff, those were Chuck's words. And also, the new stuff I like playing a lot better. It sounds a lot better than our earlier stuff.

What song were you most pleased with off the new record?

JM: I like the way "Epic" turned out, it really turned out

good. I didn't know how it was going to turn out.

RB: I like "Edge Of The World" a lot. I like the instrumental a lot also.

You guys all write the music, and then the singer comes in and writes the lyrics?

JM: Yeah, pretty much.

RB: That's how it went with the last record. We had pretty much written a lot of the record before Mike joined the band, so when he got into it, almost all the songs were written. He took the tape and wrote the lyrics.

You're not into writing lyrics?

JM: I have a hard time. They usually end up seeming silly.

RB: I'm more into writing lyrics, but this last time I figured we'd just let the new singer go for it.

JM: And he wasn't having any trouble writing them. He was banging them out.

It seems like your record company gives you a lot of freedom.

JM: We have total control. They've never told us what to put on a record or what not to. There's been some friendly suggestions, but we've been left to it.

RB: Yeah, it hasn't changed at all. I mean, we get to do pretty much whatever we want.

JM: I think it's maybe because we're kind of confusing to the record company, and they figure it's best to let us do things the way we think they should be done.

Actually, you're pretty confusing just to interview.

JM: The best way is to go for it.

Here I am.

JM: And not be afraid.

So, you guys put a lot of energy into your live shows.

JM: Yeah, live. We're all into our live shows.

Is that your favorite part of being in a band?

JM: Absolutely, I like the spontaneity, you never know what's going to happen, and you're always in different places.

RB: It's that hour or so a day where you can get up there and do your thing in front of a lot of people.

What kind of music did you listen to as a kid?

JM: I remember riding around with my mom in the car and hearing the Beatles on the radio a lot.

So your mom was pretty liberal?

JM: She never did anything to stop me from getting into music. She kind of got me into it. She started me off playing piano when I was about five years old. And I played all sorts of different instruments before I decided I wanted to play guitar.

You used to play with...

JM: Cliff Burton from Metallica, me, and Mike Bordin (F.N.M.'s drummer) used to play in a band together.

And now you guys have opened for Metallica. What have you done since that tour.

JM: We took some time off and then went over to Europe. Now we're doing this tour with Soundgarden and Voivod. It's a good mix, I think the fans really like the lineup.

Roddy, what first got you into music and being in a band?

RB: Probably moving up to San Francisco from L.A. There's a lot of crazy kids up there, lots of drugs. I was young, you know, eighteen, and there was a lot going on up there at the time, a lot of heavy metal stuff. I thought Primus was really good. Have you heard of them?

Sure. What about House Of Wheels?

RB: Yeah. I haven't seen Paul around for awhile though. Oh yeah, I think the Cult should move out of L.A. and go back to wherever the fuck they came from.

Don't you like them?

JM: Nope. [Enter singer Mike Patton]

So you're happy being in Faith No More?

MP: Yeah, a lot. It's kind of nice stepping into a situation where there are already a lot of people motivated for the band.

The press has been really good, and I haven't heard any of the usual "the new singer sucks" stuff.

MP: There's been a bit of that. There's been a couple of things written in the English press.

What else is new. Who gives a fuck. As far as I'm concerned, rock n' roll's American.

MP: Now that's a good attitude. I could see that!

How did the Metallica audience act towards you?

MP: Good, bad, awesome, you could never tell. Sometimes you were lucky and it went great. But Metallica played with us every night, and that helped. But truthfully, most of the fans there wanted to see Metallica. [Enter bassist Bill Gould]

BG: One of the nights, people waited two hours in the rain to see Metallica. Nobody wants to see an opening band.

I do!

MP: Well, if only all the people were like you.

BG: Yeah, as intelligent as you.

Please repeat that.

MP: Most people aren't as intelligent as Sherri !!

Thank you. I think we can finish up this interview now.

Thanks guys. Just joking... Mike, was it a trip playing in front of 10,000 people for the first time?

MP: It was great. The first time it was like I wasn't there. It was like I was sitting on the side watching or something. It was really weird, like a dream. The ceilings are so high in an arena that you don't sweat like in a club. It gets hot 'cause you're moving around, but you're not sweating, weird.

So your make-up stayed on perfectly? Ha Ha!

MP: Oh yeah, it didn't run at all. And my spandex didn't get wrinkled. Ha! Ha!

No eye liner smudges?

MP: No, none at all. My hair spray didn't come out either, so my hair stayed up the entire time.

Oh cool, a poof hair-do! Seriously though, it must have been nice to have been accepted as the singer of Faith No More by the majority of fans.

MP: Yeah.

BG: I really liked Chuck, the way he didn't care about anything. He was a personality, you know.

It must have been kind of hard to be in a band with him.

BG: It was impossible... you know, kind of like what they say about young marriages not working out.

Well, this one seems to be working out just fine. I wish you guys the best of luck.

MP: Thanks, you too. ♦



The big voice man himself, Mike Patton.

LIONS & GHOSTS

Wendy Weisberg

In the ocean of superficial, hard-rock, clone bands that is the present-day music scene, there stands an island, a Rock of Gibraltar to all that is totally unique. This pillar of individuality is none other than Lions & Ghosts.

One listen to either of the band's albums — the debut effort *VELVET KISS, LICK OF THE LIME* (EMI) or the new release *WILD GARDEN* (EMI) — and you get the sense that true musical intellect is at work — provocative yet unpretentious lyrics intricately interwoven with complex yet melodic music.

Vocalist Rick Parker, guitarist Michael Lockwood and drummer Michael Murphy have been dubbed "the poet laureate of the L.A. rock scene" by many in the industry. From the hauntingly melodic "Arson In Toyland" to the psychedelic, acoustic "Flowers Of Evil," Lions & Ghosts songs provide plenty of food for thought for the thinking rock fan.

In the following interview, Rick Parker reveals the sources of his inspiration.

PROPAGANDA: Why did you decide to record the new album without having a permanent line-up?

RICK PARKER: Well, we had hoped to find a bass player that would be a permanent member of the band. The guy that played on the album, Pete Comita, was supposed to be that, but it just didn't work out. He's a really great guy, but he's just got some things he's got to work out. That's all I can say right now.

Why did you feel the need for a rhythm guitarist?

The record we recently recorded had more guitar than the first one, instead of using so many different instruments. On the first record, we wanted to be Sgt. Peppers II or something. We'd been dreaming of making a record for so long and getting to do all the things that you could do in a recording studio with other instruments that we hadn't been able to do in the live form up until then. So when we went to record that first record, we were very excited about having Tony Visconti (Bowie's producer) arrange strings and finding a trumpet player. We were hauling people off the street and asking them to play. We were renting sitars, etc. — anything we could think of to make it shine even brighter.

When it was time to record the new album, we had all that out of our system. We wanted to make more of a straight forward rock n' roll sounding record that better reflected what people have come to know by watching us play live on the west coast. So instead of adding a little extra melody with violins, we just did it with guitars, so at the end of the day, we had a record that was a little denser in terms of guitars than we were able to pull off live. Getting a rhythm guitarist seemed like the natural thing to do.

Will songs like "House of Cards" or "Mary Popsmith" (from old demos) ever make it onto any B-sides or future albums?

Oh sure. We have a real deep backlog of songs. The song "Capture" on the newest record is one of the first songs we ever wrote. We threw it on because it was part of our past and we didn't want it to go unnoticed. "House of Cards" and "Mary Popsmith" might end up on a record, sure.

I haven't seen Lions & Ghosts play a full set since last year. Are you still doing covers in your shows, like "Slider" and "Magic Carpet Ride"?



Rock n' roll renegade — Rick Parker.

Yeah, we've got some new covers worked out, actually. But you'll have to come down to the show to see what they are. Covers are just little treats for us and the audience to lighten things up a little bit. It sometimes gets a bit serious after the tenth original heartfelt song in a row.

Seeing as your music is difficult to define, have you found this to be to your disadvantage in anyway?

I don't know. Any band that's worth a shit has always had a sound of its own. I like bands that when you hear ten seconds of their music, you can recognize their sound. Jane's Addiction is like that, and I love that about them. Or Guns N' Roses — you can hear a new song by them and go, "yep, that's them." The Cure, the Doors, the Stones, the Beatles are like that. Any great band has got a recognizable style of their own, and that's all I've ever wanted to have. I don't deliberately try and go against the grain. We just do what we like. L.A. is a real trend-conscious town. Last year it was the Poison/Guns N' Roses thing. There were a million

bands trying to do that. We just do what we like. We've never attempted to hop on the bandwagon or measure up to someone else's expectations. It sounds cliché but it's true.

As far as it working for or against us — in some ways it's worked for us, in some ways against us. If somebody wants a clone, then it's working against us. If somebody wants original music, then it's working for us. We've gotten a lot of respect for doing our own thing. That's probably why we have our record deal, and it's why we're doing what we do.

How did the tour for WILD GARDEN go?

After a two week stint on the west coast, we did about 35 dates nationwide. It was kind of slow starting out, but we kept at it and things really picked up. Now we're getting lots of airplay and the album is getting amazing press. We're just gonna take it as it goes, and see what happens.

Describe the ideal creative setting for a Lions & Ghosts tune to bloom.

To be honest, most of my songs come at about four in the morning after a few cups of stiff coffee, when no one's around. I get a lot done in the middle of the night. For lyrics, that's when it usually comes. As for the music, we create it just by jamming. We have a studio at EMI where all of our equipment is set up, and we're in there all the time banging away, experimenting with new ideas.

Are we going to see some of these "new ideas" on the next album?

To tell you the truth, I'm not even sure what's going on it or how it will sound. We're always experimenting. Maybe it'll be all acoustic or something.

You took a long leave of absence after the tour for the first album ended. Has your audience changed in that time?

We went into hibernation to write for this new release. We had about a year to come out with the new record and just wrote songs for a solid seven months. We wanted the material to be really strong. A lot of the stuff couldn't make it onto **WILD GARDEN** because we wrote so much. That's why we didn't play live for so long.

And also, you didn't have a permanent bass player.

Well, Todd (Hoffman, ex-bassist) was still with us up until we started to record. He worked for that whole year writing the tunes with us. We kind of parted ways right at the beginning of recording for the record. He joined another band called Voices on MCA. I understand they're really good. We're all still friends, ya know, we've been playing together for a long time. He just wanted to move on to a new situation. The bass player that played on the record didn't let us down at all. He did justice to the songs in the way Todd used to — even added some stuff of his own to it.

On VELVET KISS (the first album), the song "Love & Kisses From the Gutter" seems to be the rock track, and on the new record, the song "American Ghost" has that same harder quality. It sticks out from the others.

It's funny you should say that. Our producer mentioned that to me. I can understand why. I thought it was necessary to have variety on the record. The last song, "Mr. Blue Sky", doesn't fit either. "American Ghost" reminds me a little of Junkyard; that's probably why I like it.

What clubs do you like to play?

I've always dug playing the Whisky. The Doghouse (new club held on Tues. nights at the Shamrock) is cool. We had a good time playing there.

What was the inspiration for "Mermaid" (off the new album)?

Oh that's a tongue-in-cheek song, completely. It just started out as a joke song. The riff is like this bombastic rock thing. It kind of reminds me of a pop Zeppelin song or something, the way the drums and guitar sound like Led Zeppelin to me. But, if they were doing a pop song with Ray Davies (Kinks) on vocals — it's just about going out and getting drunk and being tortured by all the beautiful women that I see because they all lure me into their webs like spiders and capture me, and then persecute me, ya know? It's not meant to be taken seriously.

Are most of the songs personal?

Yes, they are. We write from experience. The lyrics are inspired by people I know and times we've had, definitely. I read a lot of books, but that's just to keep my wits sharp.

What do you like to read?

I love poetry, but I read all kinds of stuff. I read anything I can get my hands on. I read Cervantes' **Don Quixote** while we were doing this record. I was a literature major at U.C.L.A., but I dropped out in my third year. College just wasn't... I just wanted to be a musician. I was in two bands at the time. Some fly-by-night promoter actually got my first band, Banner, a tour of Europe — 15 shows — and we were thrilled. So I dropped out of school and went over there. Ten of the shows fell through, and we ended up sleeping on park benches with no money. But it got me started, sort of dove in head first trying to do rock n' roll in more than just a hobby way.

What's the most emotional/meaningful Lions & Ghosts song for you?

It changes depending on the mood I'm in. All the songs reflect an emotional stance. Uh, I guess "Mr. Blue Sky." It was a screenplay I wrote when I was in college. It's pretty literal to what the song describes. I had this idea of an old bum walking down the street, fishing through the trash and he stumbles on this brick of gold and realizes he can be rich and it could change his life, and he kind of gets delirious from the feeling, and he kind of takes it for granted for a second and it's gone. So, that's just a metaphor for finding anything in an unexpected place. Finding an amazing person in the dingiest, funkier bar in Hollywood, that you'd never expect to find there, and falling madly in love with her and taking it for granted and SNAP — all of a sudden — she's gone. You may never be quite the same. It could be a metaphor for that, or... It's kinda like when your life changes because something comes along that's really amazing that you didn't expect and then [snaps] when it's gone, you're not the same anymore. That's what the song's about.

"Too Shy" seems like it's a really emotional song also.

It has a really simple message, but you can really get into the idea of how horribly frustrating it is to be inhibited, and you just want to break free so badly. I really get into singing that song; the music really gets you going.

Special thanks to Cathy Watson and Angie Jenkins at EMI.



Paula Bullwinkle

In the lair of Lions & Ghosts.



THE WONDER STUFF

a
dramatization
by
Stephanie Young

The Characters:

Miles Hunt: Singer/Guitarist of The Wonderstuff
Malcom Treece: Guitarist of The Wonderstuff
Journalist: Writer for neo-publication Propaganda
Lynn Lubash: Publicity Henchwoman

The Setting:

A large conference room. At its center is a large oak table. On the table are various biodegradable fast food packages, cans of soda, cigarette packs, ashtrays and various pieces of paper. Two young men and another older male are sitting at the table. A female journalist enters alongside the band's New York publicist. She is casually introduced to the two young men, who remain seated. The publicist takes a seat in the rear. On her left is an elaborate stereo system. The journalist sits down and prepares her notes. The first question is then asked.

Journalist: You've been labeled the quintessential British pop band of the late '80s. What evokes this title and how is it directly related to your music?

Miles Hunt (smugly and in a Northern English accent):

What does quintessential mean, when broken down?

Journalist (quietly, taken a little by surprise): I should say it means a pop band that defines the late '80s. I came across the tag in your press release.

Miles (sarcastically): Gee, impressive release.

Malcom (his good nature immediately shines through, speaks with a Northern English drawl which is a little hard to understand): I'd say the Smiths were that.

Miles: I suppose the stuff we did on the first album is instant type stuff. But, I also think it's really tiring.

Journalist (rephrases the question): Do you think your music appeals to a wide range of people?

Miles: I suppose it's instantly recognizable because we've come from the indie thing that happened in England. We just deal in melodies. I guess bands have crossed various tastes. None of us are particularly defined in our musical tastes. We all like a shitload of things. It would be dull to say I get off on the Pixies, it would be narrowminded. Whereas I'll get accused of being a boring ol' hippy for the music I like.

Journalist (directing the question to Malcom): And you?

Malcom (laughs): I'm a boring old hippy as well!

Miles: No, he's the one that listens to the Petrols and the Pixies!

Journalist: So why are you defined as the British pop band of the late '80s?

Malcom: Basically, we write songs that are based on melodies and have vocal parts.

Miles: We really don't put any frills on it, it's just a song. It's not long, because if it were any longer, it would be boring.

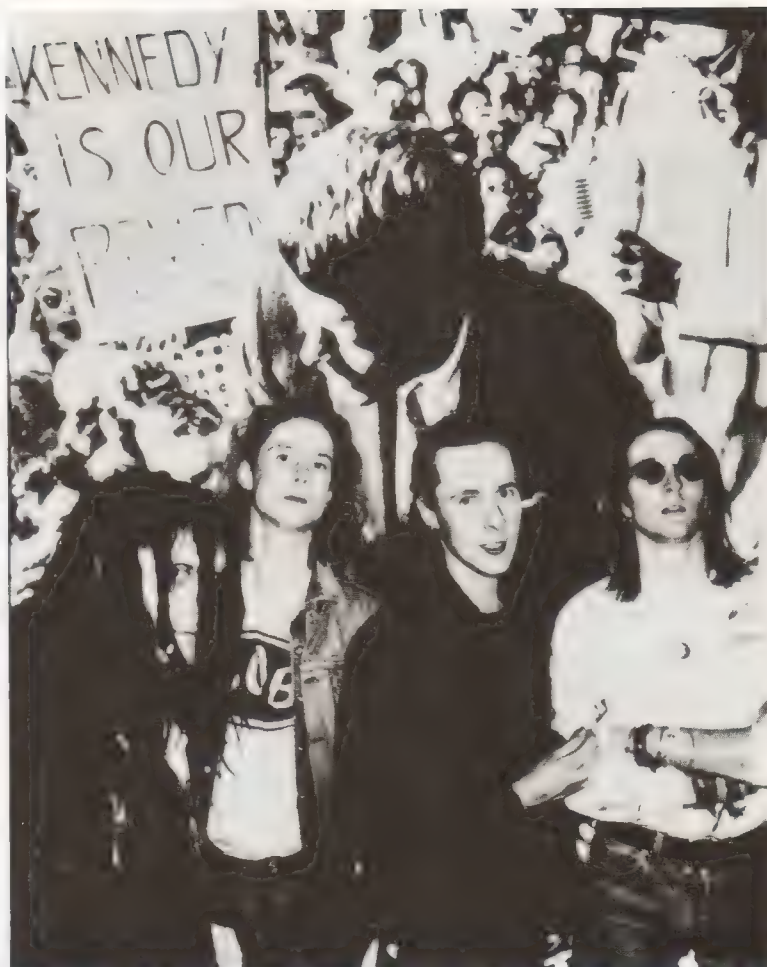
Journalist: You're about to release a new album [called Hup]. Tell me about that.

Miles (yawning): It could only be what we're capable of doing. Last year, I was rumored to have said in an interview that I wouldn't be surprised if we never made a second album, and at that point I would've been surprised if we did make one because we just sort of exhausted ourselves. We wrote like 30 songs and released them in one year.

Journalist: So why did you decide to make a second album?

Miles: We made HUP because we had written songs. To try and tell you anything different would be a lie. There were a few things we were thinking about when we were writing the stuff.

Malcom: The one thing we didn't want to make was an EIGHT LEGGED GROOVE MACHINE Part Two. We all had enough of the one guitar attack. We wanted to bring a few other things in there.



Wonder Stuff: Bass Thing, Martin Gikes, Miles Hunt, Malcom Treece.

Miles: We wanted to play around with mood a bit more — a bit more variation.

Journalist: Would you say your second album is more uplifting than the first?

Malcom: It is for us, because it's new. You exhaust what you can do to a certain point with the first album, and then you get in a situation where you don't want to hear it anymore or play it. Now we're in a situation where we can go out anywhere with this new album.

Journalist: Tell me about some of the new songs.

Malcom: Some of the songs we've had for quite awhile. They feel like old songs.

Journalist: How about individual songs? What is "Radio Asskiss" about?

Miles (obviously annoyed, he responds testily): If you have to ask, you'll never understand.

Malcom: It's a continuation of "Disco King."

Miles (resigning himself to the fact that he'll have to give an explanation): Beginning of this year, end of last year, we were just totally cheesed off with the record company wanting to throw us in the arena, where revolting pop music exists. It's nothing more than a commodity. That's the way the whole system works, and you start to think the only way someone is going to get to hear of you is if some little fuckin' tosser goes around to the radio stations and basically licks their asses off. [He continues with a false sense of self-pity.] While I was writing "Radio Asskiss" I was just thinking that I was worth more than that. Record companies moan about low record sales, tough luck, they created it. They fucked it up by turning it into a business; the same way you'd sell washing machines.

Lynn Lubash: Would anyone like anything to drink?

Miles: Yeah, a Perrier, please.

Journalist: Isn't this hostility towards the record company a very idealized way of looking at things?



SEA HAGS CONTINUED

Miles: No, it's reality to us. It doesn't really interest us to get really famous in the end. A major record company only sees things as how everything can get better. There's never a point where a record company will sit back and be satisfied.

Malcom: We don't suck up to people; we won't play the game of formats and all that.

Journalist (lights up a cigarette): What about your notorious reputation as a band that likes to insult their audience?

Malcom: It's better to get some reaction than no reaction. A gig could be going fine, it could be brilliant and still cheese you off. Things happen, people misinterpret things. Some of the reviews we've gotten have been pathetic.

Miles (insightfully): It's involvement, isn't it? People like to shout, people like to get drunk and have themselves heard. It's just totally fuckin' dogged when you hear singers say, "this is the best night of my life, I love you people." How many times have you heard that, and how many times do they say that every night on the fucking tour?

Malcom: We've been on tour with bands and it's like, "I love being here," and I try to believe I'm enjoying it. Sick!

Miles: It's really patronizing. And I'm as guilty as the next guy, I just do it the other way around, and everyone knows I'm just being a dick. So rather than patronize and tell them that they're wonderful, when I don't really think they are, I say, "you bunch of ugly fuckers!" Not many are gonna stand there and take it. They're gonna shout and throw things back. Then they're involved and it's not just us and the audience, it's everyone in the room together. We can all hate each other.

Journalist: How was your first tour of the states?

Malcom: It was great. A whirlwind tour that took us to the two coasts and Toronto. The reactions were all very good.

Miles: It's just different to play to people who are enthusiastic. They don't have the lackadaisical attitude of English audiences, which bores me.

Journalist: What do you think of the whole heavy metal/hard rock scene that's happening here in America?

Malcom: Guns N' Roses have some good tunes; the rest are rubbish.

Journalist: I just came back from a metal convention out in L.A. What do you think about the fact that they can hold a three-day convention totally related to that type of music?

Miles (disgusted): It's like the Decline Of Western Civ II with those bands. The reason why they do it is wrong. Did you ever listen to the crap those people talk? Everything is drink and drugs. Big fucking deal! Then there's the other ones that are really annoying. They see it as a "career." It's like, "yeah, I'm gonna be famous, I know it, I believe it." Fuck off, you little cunt, you dismal, worthless piece of shit. I hate them. All they want is a slap on the back, and they're the scum of the earth. They haven't got an ounce of imagination between the lot of them. They all look the same, sound equally as bad, sound equally as bad as the past 20 years of shit that they took their influences from. They're just promoting themselves. They don't give, they just take.

Journalist: How would you distinguish yourselves from, say, Duran Duran? You're both labeled as pop bands.

Malcom: The difference is that they wanted to be big pop-stars. Their number one goal was to be rich and famous. The fact that they had some songs was secondary. We started off with the idea that we had some songs. Don't forget, you have to have some substance too.

Miles: Duran Duran never looked natural. There's nothing natural about five Birmingham lads strolling up and down the beaches of Rio with big-titted tarts, going on about their lost foreign love affairs. Fuck that — "you're from Council Estates in Birmingham and don't you know it. Don't kid us that you're anything else." Even their videos were just a means to something else. Their goals were no different than those L.A. rock bands.

Malcom: To be rich and famous.

Miles: To be slapped on the back. Whereas, as you can see, there's absolutely no point to the Wonder Stuff.

Journalist (cynically): You say it with such relish.

[And life goes on as usual in the independent music scene.]

Special thanks to everyone at Polygram Records!

you of the Golden Gate Bridge?

It almost looks like something out of Disneyland. It is gorgeous though. It's really cool that you're about to enter a new decade as major artists — the '90s.

RY: Nine is a very special number, like 1989 and 1990 — two nines. There's a lot of nines going on for us. We got signed on the ninth.

Are you superstitious? Do you believe in those things?

CS: Sure. It's got a lot to do with it, lucky numbers and stuff.

RY: There's definitely luck involved with a lot of things.

Do you think people have preconceived notions about you just because of the band name? It sounds like water witches or something.

CS: Sure does. You know what it is — it's superstition, old fishermen tales. It's like old wives' tales that have been spread around the world for hundreds of years. It started in Scotland when people were very superstitious about everything — the sun, the moon, the sea. It's got that mysterious appeal, like a sea witch. You know, the sea was a way of life for those who lived near it back then, and so a lot of people have written about it. It lived on in the Popeye legend, and it's still in America's consciousness. It's ambiguous in the sense that it could be male or female. The sea has always been very mysterious.

I keep you in the metal section at my radio station, even though you're not really metal. How do you feel about being promoted as a metal band? Does it bother you?

RY: That seems to be the flavor of the day right now.

What else could they call it? It's not really alternative music, and it's not pop, even though the arrangements are very sparse and controlled. It's a bluesy rock, the "new bluesy rock thing" is what you should call it.

CS: It's definitely got its feet in the blues — it's a blues based thing. Not clear off into "Bloo ahh ahh" heavy metal.

It's almost biker-ish...

RY: Yeah! The Cult, Steppenwolf feel.

CS: That's why it would be a great bill with Ian. We have to do that show. And dig this, Lars [Ulrich of Metallica] wants to bring us out on the road, and Ian wants to bring us out. Lars and Ian were out on the same tour [Metallica/Cult], and there was talk of three bands. The tour of the decade.

That would've been rad. Did you see Metallica this year?

RY: Yeah, but earlier with the Monsters of Rock show.

CS: Did you ever see them with Cliff? So cool, man. Cliff was like these standard. He would be a superstar, man.

Let's switch gears. If you had to describe your music in terms of a type of food, what would it be and why?

RY: Okay. Is it sweet? Nah, real hard — a hard bread roll.

CS: I'd say something hefty, like some Viking fucking power stew. Such good questions. Hey, I want to see this whole thing printed up. This feels like a good interview.

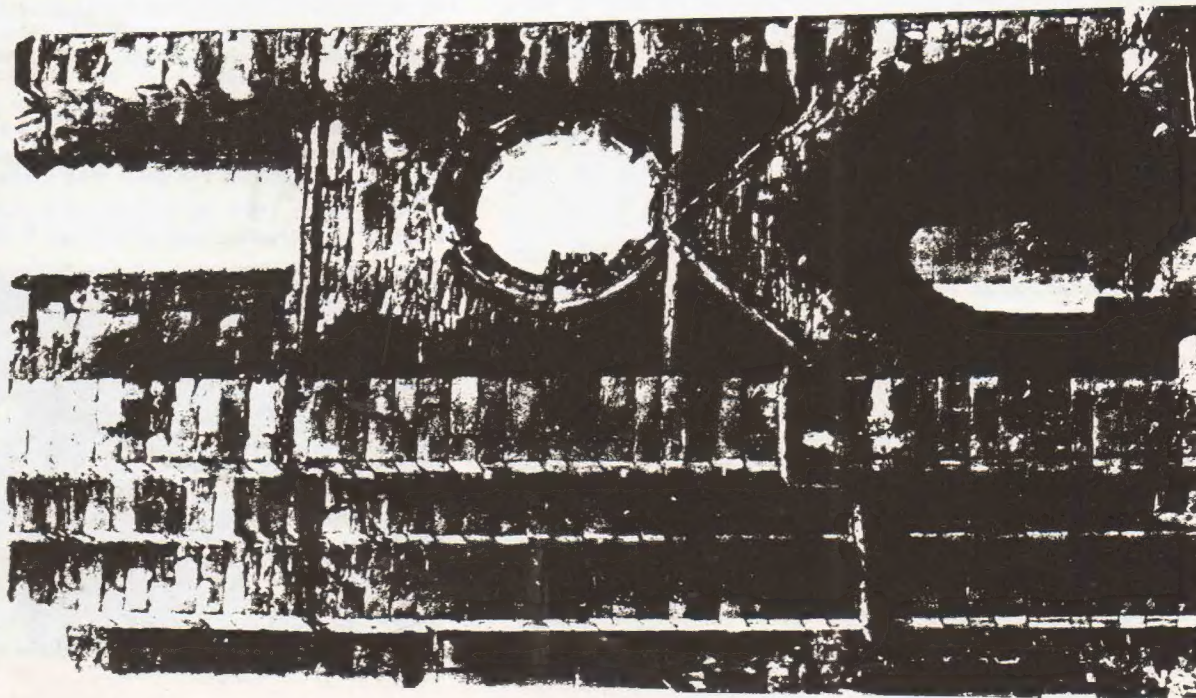
RY: Aw, Propaganda's a good mag. They won't do us wrong.

We wouldn't think of it. Special thanks to Arlett and everyone at Chrysalis, and of course, Ron and Chris! ♦



Kathy Lynchard

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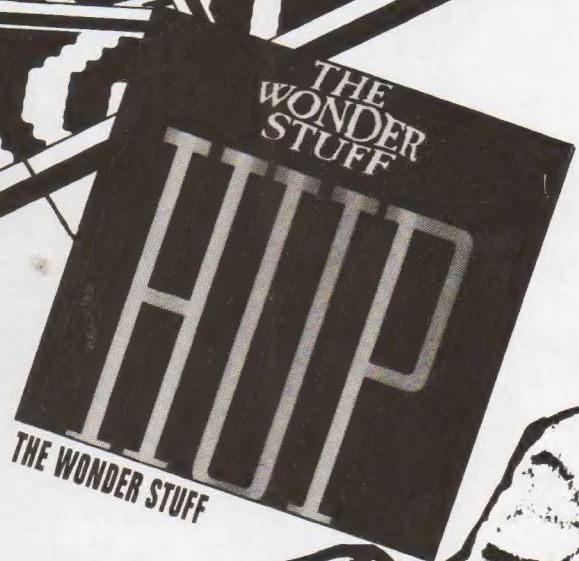
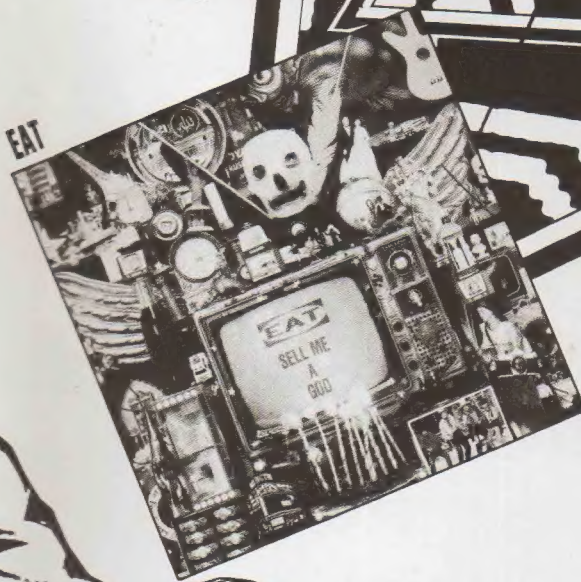
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